CENTRAL CONFERENCE OF MENNONITES

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HISTORY

of the

CENTRAL CONFERENCE MENNONITE CHURCH

William B. Weaver, M. A.

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TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE
OF THE
CENTRAL CONFERENCE MENNONITE CHURCH.

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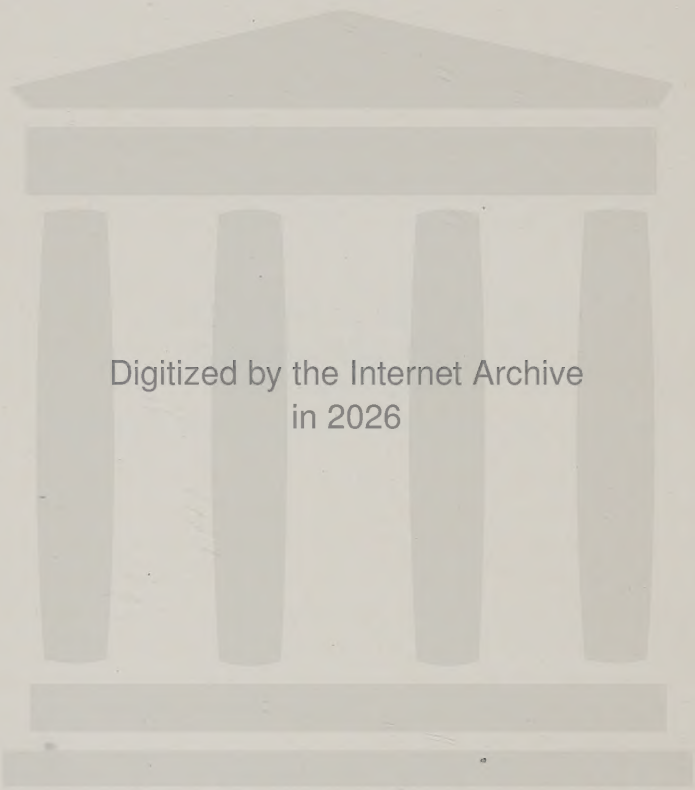

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PREFACE

Since 1922, when the writer became pastor of the North Danvers Mennonite Church, he has been interested in the writing of a history of the Central Conference of Mennonites. The occasion for writing it was presented when a thesis was required for the Masters' Degree at Northwestern University. After the writing of the thesis, the writer was urged by a number of Conference leaders to enlarge the work and publish it as the history of the Central Conference.

To write the hitsory of the Central Conferencce Mennonite Church was difficult because the written sources of information were very meager. These Mennonites, as well as all others, have not been very much concerned in the past about the recording of their activities. They were a rural people. At first their congregations were self-governing and independent of one another. They were not very much interested in education in the past, and so there were very few who felt they had the ability to write history. It should also be noted that the Conference is still young, not having been organized until 1908. The Church was more interested in the past years in the development of her activities and the establishment of institutions.

Although it was difficult to get information through written sources, yet the writer was very fortunate in the fact that there were quite a large number among the ministry and laity now living, who were young people at the time of the birth of the Conference. This was the opportune time for writing the history of this group. Much information was received through private interviews and correspondence with the older members of the Conference, both ministry and laity.

This history is not a detailed account of the activities and institutions of the Church. It serves rather as an outline of the history of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. It is the hope of the writer that other historians will take up va-

rious phases of the Conference work and expand it still further. The primary interest of the book is not as much to record the present activities of the Church, as it is those of the past. It is more concerned with origins and the past development and growth of the various activities and institutions.

The writer is indebted to many persons for information, criticisms, suggestions and the use of written sources. Many of these are mentioned throughout the book. The writer is particularly indebted to Mr. C. R. Stuckey, Danvers, Illinois, only son of Father Stuckey, founder of the Conference; to Mrs. J. S. Augspurger (deceased)the only daughter of Father Stuckey; to Rev. Aaron Augspurger, Saybrook, Illinois, a grandson of Father Stuckey, who gave valuable information in private interviews and also wrote very valuable articles in the Christian Evangel and Year Book on the history of the Central Conference; to Rev. Emanuel Troyer, the Field Secretary, who kindly read the manuscript and gave critical suggestions; to Rev. L. B. Haigh and Rev. William G. Kensinger who furnished valuable information concerning the foreign field, and to the older ministers of the various congregations, who so kindly assisted in the history of their churches. To all these and others the writer is deeply indebted and acknowledges his appreciation.

Wm. B. Weaver.

Danvers, Illinois.
Dec. 23, 1926.

INTRODUCTION

A history of the Mennonites, and more especially of those of America, is a task surrounded with many difficulties. But few collections of their books exist in America; in many of their churches no records have been kept, or have been lost; and many old and valuable papers and records that did exist, which would have been the ordinary source of information, have been destroyed or lost, not being regarded at the time of any value. This is true also of the Central Conference of Mennonites, as they, too, have been far more concerned about a life of service than the recording of their beneficent deeds.

Bancroft said of the Germans in America: "Neither they nor their descendants have laid claim to all that is their due." This is attributable partly to language, partly to race instincts and hereditary tendencies. Quiet in their tastes, deeply absorbed in the peaceful avocations of life, they have permitted their more progressive neighbors to deny them a proper place even on the historic page.

Daniel Webster, in one of his speeches said, as if to commend our kind of notices: "There is still wanted a history which shall trace the progress of social life. We still need to learn how our ancestors, in their houses, were fed, lodged and clothed, and what were their employments. We wish to know more of the changes which took place from age to age in the lives of the first settlers."

There is a great need for a history of the Central Conference. One reason why there has been such great loss in the Mennonite Church at large, the people did not know their history, and the rich heritage which is theirs. Our young people need to know the faith, the loyalty, the labor, and sacrifice of our Fathers, in building up the new communities and in building churches, and their interest in missions, for the promotion of the Kingdom of God.

Our people ought to know the history of the organization of the Conference, the beginning of Missions and the organization of the institutional work of the Church.

Rev. William B. Weaver, a life long member of the Mennonite Church, is eminently fitted to write a book of this kind. A graduate of the Shipshewana High School in the year 1905, he taught school for six years and then attended Goshen College where he received his A. B. Degree in 1914. During the spring and summer of 1914 he attended Indiana University where he majored in history.

Brother Weaver was licensed to preach in 1913. On Sept. 14, 1914, he was ordained to the ministry and installed as pastor of the Prairie St. Mennonite Church at Elkhart, Indiana.

Rev. Weaver became professor of History at Goshen College in the fall of 1914 which position he retained until 1920 when he became professor of Bible and Church History until 1922 at which time he took up the pastorate of the Eighth St. Church at Goshen for a short period. July 1, 1922, he was called to the pastorate of the North Danvers Church which position he still holds. During this pastorate, Rev. Weaver studied at the Garrett Biblical Institute, majoring in Church History and received his Masters' Degree in 1926 from Northwestern University.

Rev. Weaver was untiring in his efforts in collecting the material for this history, and it should serve as a source of inspiration to all Mennonites and especially to the young people of the Central Conference.

Emanuel Troyer,
Field Secretary of the Central Conference.

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HISTORY

of

The Central Conference Mennonite Church

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND BEFORE THE REFORMATION

The Central Conference Mennonite Church, in common with all Mennonites, has its origin in the Anabaptist movement of Europe at the time of the religious reformation of the sixteenth century. The historical background of this church involves a discussion of the rise and development of Anabaptism in Europe, particularly in Holland; the organization of the peaceful Anabaptists by Menno Simon; the division of the Mennonite Church in Switzerland in 1693 into the Amish and Mennonite groups; the migration of the Amish to America, particularly to Central Illinois.

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

As stated above, the Amish and Mennonites originated from the religious group in the sixteenth century, called Anabaptists. The Anabaptist movement was a reaction from the absolutism and ecclesiasticism of the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages. Some have even attempted to trace the origin of the Anabaptists and Mennonites back to the days of the Apostles. It is true that the Anabaptists and later the Mennonites held religious views that were very similar to the teachings of the early Christian Church. Because of these facts it is well to trace briefly the history of the church to the time

of the Reformation and also to study the various influences that helped to bring about the Anabaptist movement.

The church of the Middle Ages was a product of the historical growth and development of the early Christian Church. There is a great difference between the church in the days of Paul and the days of Gregory VII, Innocent III and Boniface VIII, although there is an historical continuity between the two churches. The early Christian Church the first one hundred years was very simple in its worship and organization. The power of a resurrected Christ and His immediate Second Coming served as an incentive to great missionary activity. The Church developed no creed nor complex organization. In the second period of her history from 100 to 313 A. D. the church developed a close organization and formulated a definite creed. She was compelled to do this because of the inroads made by heresy and the persecutions of the Roman Government. This development of creed and organization continued until about 590 A. D. when the bishop of Rome had gained so much power that he came to be recognized as the Pope (Papa) of the Catholic or Universal Church. A very significant event in the history of the Christian Church from the standpoint of its temporal power came in 800 A. D. when Pope Leo III placed a crown on the head of the Frankish King Charles and he became Emperor Charlemagne, the head of the Holy Roman Empire. This Empire had two great powers, the Church and State. The church now became interested in political control and the history of the Empire from 960 A. D. to 1519 A. D. is a conflict between Pope and Emperor for supremacy. The Christian Church left her former simple faith, simple organization and worship, and became a great religious, economic, political institution with a definite formulated creed and hierarchical sacerdotal system. The church now came to look upon Christianity more as a matter of creeds and rites than spirit and conduct. The center of her worship became the celebration of her mass. Dr. Hulme says, "Instead of the spiritual and moral emphasis she had gradually built up a most com-

prehensive and with regard to its fundamental dogmas a well articulated system of belief. For her creed she has claimed absolute authority. She alone was the interpreter to man of the Will and Word of God. Seven sacraments, namely baptism, confirmation, holy eucharist, penance, extreme unction, ordination and matrimony had been instituted for the salvation of man; they were indispensable to his spiritual life. Thus the laity were absolutely dependent upon the priesthood for the nourishment of their religious life. She had come to be not only a religious guide but also a great juristic, economic institution."[1] The enthusiasm, fervor and missionary spirit of the early church gave way to an ascetic ideal which is well described by John Addington Symonds: "During the Middle Ages man had lived undeveloped in a cowl. He had not seen the beauty of the world or had seen it only to cross himself and turn aside, to tell his beads and pray. Like St. Bernard traveling along the shores of Lake Leman and noticing neither the azure of the waters nor the luxuriance of the vines nor the radiance of its mountains with their robe of sun and snow, but bending a thought burdened forehead over the neck of the mule—even like this monk, humanity had passed, a careful pilgrim, intent on the terrors of sin, death and judgment along the highways of the world and had scarce known that they were sightworthy or that life was a blessing. Beauty is a snare, pleasure a sin, the world a fleeting show, man fallen and lost, death the only certainty; ignorance is acceptable to God as a proof of faith and submission; abstinence and mortification are the only safe rule of life, these were the fixed ideas of the ascetic medieval church."[2]

The two fundamental institutions that affected the lives of the people in the medieval period were feudalism and the church. As a result of these two institutions we find at the time of the Reformation a peasantry ignorant, superstitious, poor, with lack of initiative, burdened and helpless. The spirit of individuality

1. Hulme, Renaissance and Reformation, p. 56.
2. Symonds, Short History of the Renaissance in Italy, p. 5.

was lost through the oppression of state and church. "The individual who tried to burst his bonds, the baron who revolted, the tribune who agitated for liberty, the unbelieving doctor, the heretical monk or the cathari were crushed. All through the Middle Ages man knew himself only as a member of a family, a race, a party, a guild or a church. He was for the most part unconscious of himself as an individual."[3] The individual was subservient in social and economic affairs to the feudal lord and in individual conscience to the external authority of the church.

CAUSES OF REFORMATION

The causes for the Reformation can be quite easily classified into two groups; the causes that came from the Catholic Church itself and those that are apart from the church. The former discussion revealed the fact that the early Christian Church developed into a Catholic Church of formalism and dogmatism. As the church grew in political and economic power she lost much of her spiritual power. Her clergy became lords who were more interested in large estates than men's souls. The spiritual minded men rather took themselves to the monasteries where they fostered the ascetic life. A great deal of worldliness and immorality came into the church. The three great sins of "Simony", "Nicolaitanism" and lay investure became very prominent. Various attempts at reform were made by various monastic orders such as the Cluniac reform movement but in spite of these reforms the church became very worldly and began to wane rapidly in power. Thus by corruption and formalism in the church and her conflict with the state she lost her power to the extent that men and religious groups became bold in their criticism of her position and life.

The causes apart from the church that brought about the Reformation were the Renaissance and the Reformers before the Reformation. The Renaissance as a movement in Europe was the most important influence in paving the way for the

3. Bourne, The Revolutionary Period of Europe, p. 61.

Reformation. But the Renaissance had its antecedents. There is no movement of the Middle Ages that had as much to do in bringing about the Renaissance as the Crusades. These were armed pilgrimages to the Holy Land by the people of Medieval Europe to drive out "the infidel", the Mohammedan power out of the Holy Land. Although this was entirely a church movement, yet it weakened the power of the church. Crusades meant for the masses in many cases their freedom. Many of the bishops and lords never returned from the crusades, thus weakening the feudal system and strengthening the lower classes. The crusades also brought the ignorant, superstitious, dogmatic, medieval man with his implicit faith, in touch with a new world, new people and new ideas. This broadened his mental horizon. It also stimulated commerce which gave rise to a middle class who wanted freedom and democratic government. All these influences struck vitally at the very heart of feudalism and the dogmatism and external authority of the church. By 1300 a new revival, material and intellectual, appeared so the latter part of the Middle Ages became a period of increased activity and progress. This gave rise to a great awakening of human spirit and the revival of classic culture known as Renaissance.

The Renaissance meant a reawakening, a rebirth, a recovery of the freedom of thought. It was a revival of the spirit of individuality and nationality. It expressed itself in different forms in different countries. In Italy it was expressed in literature and art; in France in education; in Spain a reformation within the Catholic Church; in Germany in religion. In contrast with the medieval spirit described in the quotation of Dr. Symonds where the individual was considered as part of a social group the Renaissance emphasized the fact "I am a man. I have rights and liberties. It's worth while living in this world." The Christian phase of the Renaissance expressed itself in the study of the early Church Fathers, study of Greek and Latin, especially a comparison of Greek and Latin versions of the Scripture. This intensive study led in time to the

questioning of some of the customs and doctrines of the medieval church and so had an important bearing on the Reformation. In conclusion it might be said that the Renaissance placed the emphasis on this present life, sacredness of the individual, historical and scientific method of study and an encouragement of inventions such as the printing press. It is not difficult to see how this movement prepared the minds of the people for such teachings as were given by the Anabaptist leaders.

Another cause for the Reformation apart from the church was the work of men who were imbued with the reform spirit even before the time of the Renaissance and Reformation. Among these many reformers should be mentioned Abelard, Arnold of Brescia, Petrarch, Wycliff, Huss, Lefevre and Erasmus. Just a few brief statements of the contribution of these men must suffice. Abelard (1079-1142) stimulated investigation. He believed both in reason and faith. He said these two are not antagonistic but faith is above reason. His great contribution to the reformation was the fact that he encouraged research instead of an unthinking adherence to tradition and authority. Arnold of Brescia (1155) attacked the riches and temporal power of the church. Through his influence people agitated for political and religious freedom. Petrarch (1304-1374) has been called the first modern man. He emphasized the importance and beauty of this life. His contribution to the Reformation was his emphasis on the individual; his method of work, which is observation, investigation and reason. Dr. Hulme says: "Up to Petrarch the world was essentially medieval. It is with him that the modern world begins."[4] John Wycliff (1320-1384) opposed the worldliness and corruption of the clergy and monks of the church. He also attacked the doctrines of the church, especially the holy eucharist. He translated the Bible into the English language from the Vulgate. Perhaps the greatest contribution of Wycliff is that he created a demand in England for a religious reformation. The lasting impressions of Wycliff, however, were not in Eng-

4. Dr. Hulme, Renaissance and Reformation, p. 81.

land but rather in Bohemia where his views were accepted by John Huss (1369-1413). Huss preached that every Christian is a priest and that the sacraments of the church were not essentially necessary to salvation. The particular contribution of Lefevre (1450-1536) was the translation of the Scriptures. He accompanied his translations with introductions in which he stated his beliefs. In these introductions he advocated a restoring of primitive Christianity and the sole authority of the Scriptures.

The last of this list of reformers and perhaps the greatest one is Erasmus (1455-1536). He was the incarnation of Humanism. While receiving his training in a school in Deventer he came in touch with the teachings of the Brethren of the Common Life. He has often been called the man of Europe because of his extensive travels throughout Europe. He attempted to bring about a reformation in the church in a gradual silent way by the process of education. Although he was a staunch Catholic he believed that the church is worldly and corrupt because of ignorance. He believed that if people would read the Bible and receive knowledge the church would become simple in worship, pure in life and return to primitive Christianity. He found a wide gap between the simple precepts in the Sermon on the Mount and the theological subtleties and sacramental mysteries of his church. He said, "What was there in common between popes and bishops and Galilean fishermen; between monastic piety and apostolic life." His contribution to the Reformation can best be stated in the well known words: "Erasmus laid the egg and Luther hatched it": that is, he presented the idea and furnished the material that formed the basis for the reformation. Professor Beard says: "the Reformation that has been is Luther's monument; perhaps the Reformation that is to be will trace itself back to Erasmus."[5] Erasmus' work can best be expressed in his own words: "I have raised my voice boldly against wars which for so many years have been shaking Chris-

5. Professor Beard, Hibbert Lectures on the Reformation, p. 731.

tendom; I labored to bring theology, which had degenerated into sophisticated niceties, back to its ancient simplicity; I taught literature, which before me was almost pagan, to speak of Christ; I have aided in the revived study of languages; I have censured various foolish claims of men; I aroused the world sleeping in ceremonies almost Judaic and called it to a Christianity more pure, never condemning the ceremonies of the church, but showing that which is best." Yet as an immediate effect Erasmus failed because he attempted the impossible. Reform had been delayed too long. It required action. As one historian says: "The revolution is at hand."[6]

The significance of these men in relation to the Reformation is the fact that they stood for two principles which became fundamental in the Reformation. First, that the Christianity of their day was different from the primitive Christianity and that original Christianity must be the ultimate standard. Second, that the right of every individual Christian to study the Bible and to reach his own conclusions should be recognized by the church."[7] This brief sketch of the historical background before the reformation shows that the Reformation was a movement and grew out of the past. The Anabaptists were simply a part of that larger religious movement of Europe. The Crusades, the Renaissance, Humanism and these Reformers before the Reformation contributed their part. Professor Hurst expresses it well when he says: "The morning never comes unheralded. Every great historical movement has antecedents —those prophetic gleams which tell us that a new day is coming to the world. The Reformation was no exception to this. It had its intellectual preparation—humanism and the Renaissance; its moral preparation—Savonarola; and its dogmatic preparation—Wycliff and Huss. Each of these was a mighty historical current."[8]

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6. Hulme, Renaissance and Reformation, p. 221.
7. Adams, Civilization during the Middle Ages, p. 421.
8. Hurst, History of the Christian Church, p. 3.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND DURING THE REFORMATION.

The purpose of the preceding chapter was to show some of the leading antecedents of the Reformation. As stated before the Anabaptist movement out of which Mennonitism came has the same historical antecedents as does the general reformation movement. It was noted that because of the absolutism and corruption of the church the time was ripe for a revolution. On the other hand such movements as the Crusades and the Renaissance prepared the minds of the people for the change that was to come. Also the fact that the reformers before the Reformation through their teachings prepared the way by an emphasis on the very principles which became the foundation of the Reformation. Professor Hulme describes the situation well when he says: "It was the Protestant Revolution that drew together all the tentative, inquiring, and struggling movements for reform, put an end to the dualism which the church had established between the claims of the present world and those of the future life, and made religion an inner possession, the product of personality and the inspiration of the finest powers of the individual."[1] These movements were all mingled in the great stream that was slowly gathering force and would soon burst into a flood. Each movement became a definite and permanent factor in bringing to pass the Protestant revolution.

The protest of Martin Luther against an ecclesiastical abuse of selling indulgences found immediate response by a people who were prepared by these antecedents of the revolution and launched the great revolution in the history of the Christian Church which is called the Reformation. Martin Luther came to his decision to protest against the corruption of the

1. Hulme, Renaissance and Reformation, p. 174.

church through a deep and vital religious experience. This religious experience drove him to test the beliefs and institutions of the church. Faith became to him more than a creed. It meant a personal relationship with God. He began to preach justification by faith alone. This teaching seemed to the Catholic Church to be heresy because it discredited works as a basis of salvation. The final issue came when on October 31, 1517, Luther posted on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg his ninety-five theses. Zwingli and Calvin followed later as reformers with their emphasis on the symbolic form of communion and simplicity in church worship. All of these views advocated by these reformers had been held before. The time was now ripe for a revolution. Anabaptism arose out of this same general situation. The Anabaptist leaders felt that Luther and Zwingli refused to go all the way. The former substituted the authority of the Bible for the authority of the medieval church but who shall interpret the Bible? The reformers did not see that their position would lead to many interpretations. And so you have as a result of the Reformation not only the establishment of Lutheran and Calvinistic state churches but on the other hand the springing up of multitudinous sects who dreamed of establishing a community of saints in the midst of an evil world. This was the radical element found in the Reformation. The name given to this radical movement is Anabaptism.

THE ANABAPTISTS

The Anabaptists or "Wiedertäufer" were a group of radical reformers of the sixteenth century who were scattered throughout Switzerland, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. They arose because of a desire for free religious expression and better social conditions in the midst of absolutism and ecclesiasticism. One of the first problems that arises in the study of the history of this movement is the origin of the Anabaptists. Some have attempted to trace the origin of these people back to the days of the apostles. Others believe they

are the direct descendants of the medieval sect called the Waldenses. Others maintain that they arose as an independent group in the Reformation era and were called into being by the sixteenth century conditions. All of these sources have been taken into consideration in this discussion. It is true there were individuals and groups from the days of the apostles to the days of the Anabaptists who held views similar to those held by the Anabaptists. To trace, however, any historical continuity between these various evangelical religious groups is a fruitless attempt. Most of these religious groups were separate from the organized Catholic Church and attempted to go back in faith and form of worship to the early Christian Church. But no one of these groups, not even the Waldenses held all of the views of the Anabaptists. But since the Anabaptists attempted in their teachings to go back to primitive Christianity it is important to note a few of these groups and their teachings.

The first distinctly Christian group is Montanism. This movement was at its height at the beginning of the third century. It was a reaction from the sacerdotalism and worldliness of the organized Christian Church. Their fundamental tenets were ascetic life, the power of the Holy Spirit, simple life, adult baptism and Chiliasm. Another religious group that opposed the organized church was Novatianism. The Novatians protested against the relaxation of discipline in the church. Both the Novatians and the Donatists who followed refused to restore those back to church fellowship that had fallen away during the severe persecution of Decius and Diocletian. Other religious groups that opposed the Catholic Church were the Arians, Ebonites, Jovianists, Vigilantians, Paulicians and later the Bogomiles. All of these religious groups originated from the second to the ninth century. From the ninth to the eleventh century very few such religious groups were found. Monasticism seems to have anwered the purpose for people who wanted to get away from the external observances and the worldliness of the church. Also by the Middle Ages the church had acquired great author-

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ity. The barbarians came into the empire and the clergy became spiritual advisers and teachers to the barbarian world. This had a tendency to crush individualism and very few radical groups arose but as a result of the Crusades came the Renaissance with the growth of mysticism, the revival of letters, the resurrection of the Greek and Roman classics, the invention of the printing press, the publication of the Greek Testament, the general spirit of inquiry and the spirit of personal freedom. These influences again gave rise to the religious groups whose teachings affected the Anabaptists and later the Mennonites.

This new spirit that arose is well described by Rev. J. S. Coffman, a pioneer evangelist and educator in the Mennonite Church who in an address delivered at the exercises held at the opening of the first school building of the Elkhart Institute said: "The open gospel in the schools of Europe burned the truth of Christian piety into the hearts of learned and noble leaders whose moral power and eloquence touched the souls of multitudes and kindled a fire which threatened to sweep the continent. This was indeed a new birth but not in the sense of discovering a new religion. It was simply a bounding forth, a broadening out, a wafting on the winds, a moral force whose progress had been held in check by the power which closed the Bible to the common people, enslaved them to a wily priestcraft and gave to the world a thousand years of intellectual and moral darkness. This was simply bringing to light the truth which had been maintained since the days of Constantine,—even the time of the apostles—by dissenters to the state church. These little bands of despised and persecuted Christians were sometimes entirely annihilated; and when a few escaped they were driven into seclusion among the valleys and mountains, rocks and caves of the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Apennines. For many years these pious dissenters were known by a different name such as Bogomiles, Cathari, Paulicians, Petrobrusians, Albigenses and later Waldenses. With them crushed and bleeding and despised as they were, slumbered the spirit of progress like the dormant fires of an inactive volcano ready to

burst forth at any unsuspected moment. The time had now come. The lull in active persecutions had given time for those who served God from a true conscience to take hope. They could now look back and rejoice anew with the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem in the birth of the world's Redeemer. They could now feel a thrill of joy as they beheld the revival of that spirit of progress which had been ushered upon the world accompanied by the song of angels proclaiming peace on earth, good will to men. The mists were scattering and the light which had shown in splendor for a time and had then been shrouded for centuries by the cloak of ecclesiasticism was again brightening the world."[2]

These religious groups from the twelfth century to the time of the Reformation again placed the emphasis as had the former groups on a return to the New Testament doctrine and practise. The Petrobrusians of the twelfth century did not believe in infant baptism, sacred crosses nor sacraments. They denied and ridiculed good works done by the living for the dead. They even rebaptised those that had been baptised as infants thus antedating the Anabaptists over three centuries. Of all the groups of this period there is perhaps none that had as direct an influence on the Anabaptists as the Waldenses. As stated before some have even maintained that the Anabaptist movement grew out of the Waldensian movement. Peter Waldo of Lyons was the founder of the Waldenses. He lived in the twelfth century. The Waldenses believed in the study of the Scriptures, sanctity of life and in zealous efforts to serve men. They believed the principle of non-resistance and rejected the taking of oaths and capital punishment. Many of their views were very similar to those of the Anabaptists.

In a discussion of the origin of the Anabaptists we can then at least conclude that there is a very close relationship between the Waldenses and the Anabaptists. Anabaptism arose in a number of the communities where the Waldenses were found. Professor Newman thinks "It is probable that Peter Waldo

2. Coffman, Spirit of Progress, pp. 7, 8.

received his views from former evangelical groups and gave them to Bohemian brethren and they to the Anabaptists."[3] This much can at least be said that the Waldenses form a very important source in a study of the history of the Anabaptists. The Anabaptists interpreted the new evangelical preaching in the light of Waldensian asceticism and from the mystic indifference to dogma, but also from the Chiliastic and Separatist ideals of the Christian life born in an older day.

But on the other hand there are also reasons to believe that there was very little organic relation between the Waldenses and the Anabaptists. Very few Waldenses joined the Anabaptist movement. Practically all the Anabaptist leaders in the Reformation came either directly or indirectly out of the Catholic Church. Dr. C. Henry Smith says: "It is certain that there would have been an Anabaptist faith, even though there never had been any Waldenses or other more or less evangelical sects. All these bodies sprang more or less independently from the same source, namely, an intensive study of the common man of an accessible Bible."[4] The Anabaptists sought an individualism, an interpretation of truth and spiritual freedom of which the religious groups of the Middle Ages had no conception. They arose because of a desire for free religious expression and better social conditions in the midst of absolutism and ecclesiasticism. They were called into being by the general religious unrest and the social upheaval of the Reformation era. They were the "ultras" of the Reformation. The spirit of revolution was all around. The fact that Luther and Zwingli refused to go all the way gave ground for these radical movements. This was aided by the spread of humanism, the wide circulation of the Scripture, the art of printing and the spirit of toleration. We might finally conclude then that the Anabaptist movement of the sixteenth century had its roots in the evangelical life and thought of the religious groups of the Middle Ages but the movement was

3. Newman, History of Anti-Pedo Baptism, p. 43.
4. Smith, The Mennonites, p. 43.

called forth by the religious unrest and the social upheaval of the time.

Another difficult problem in a discussion of the history of the Anabaptists is to describe the movement because the term Anabaptism was applied indiscriminately to all who were peculiar and were neither Catholic nor Protestant and there were so many sects ranging from the quiet peaceful Anabaptists to the most radical and fanatic Chiliasts who would establish the kingdom by the sword. On the other hand the movement is complicated because it developed from two sources; the social stream which resulted in the revolt of the peasants, and the religious succession of the brethren.

The Anabaptist movement began in Switzerland. Social uprisings had taken place in Switzerland as early as 1475. Small groups of religious people upholding some of the views of the Anabaptists were found in Switzerland from 1300-1500. History records that these "praying communities" were in Basel by 1514; throughout Switzerland by 1515; in Mainz and Augsburg by 1518. These praying circles were found in France, Netherlands, Saxony, Franconia, Strassburg and Bohemia by 1524. These people called themselves the brethren. Their teaching served as good soil for the growth of Anabaptism. Dr. Jones, after describing a few of these diverse types of heresy as he calls them, says: "From the year 1200 these heresies grew like mushrooms in all Christian lands and could not be exterminated by fire, or force or inquisition."[5] In a dispute held in 1523 between the Catholics and Zwingli, there was an uneducated man, Simon Stumpf, pastor at Hongg, who declared at this disputation that the spirit of God must decide all matters of difference and each individual must interpret the Bible for himself. Here is already found the germ of Anabaptist teaching.

The earliest movement which directly introduced Anabaptism was the Zwickau prophets. The three most important leaders of this movement were Nicholas Storch, Thomas Munzer and Marcus Stubner. These men were not Anabaptists but

5. Jones, The Church's Debt to Heretics, p. 183.

they had a very great influence on the early Anabaptist leaders of Switzerland. It might be said that these Zwickau prophets received their views from the Bohemian brethren and handed them on to the early Anabaptists. They left their home in southern Saxony and came to Wittenberg, a university town, where many men of different views had flocked together. The two leading teachers in this university were Philip Melanchthon and Carlstatt. Melchanthon was a humanist and did more than anyone else in infusing the humanistic element into the religious revolutionary movement in Germany. Carlstatt was a man of learning, a mystic and a radical. Some of these Wittenberg leaders and Zwickau prophets came to Switzerland and there taught their religious views. These men believed that infant baptism must be abandoned, that God revealed Himself in present visions and prophetic inspirations which had a higher authority than the letter of the Bible. They condemned learning and claimed that the wisdom of God was hid from the learned and revealed to the ignorant. They prided themselves on an inner life and preached a millennial kingdom. These leaders were largely responsible for the peasant insurrection in 1525. The teachings of these men had a very decided effect on the Anabaptists.

Aside from the general spirit of unrest in Europe and the coming of the Zwickau prophets to Switzerland there is another cause for the rise of Anabaptism. In 1522 Huldreich Zwingli began his reformation in Switzerland. He abolished the mass, allowed the marrying of priests, held his services in German and taught the symbolic form of communion. Switzerland was prepared for Zwingli in the fact that humanism had spread over this country, they had local self government and developed a hatred for the absolutism of the church. But as with Luther so with Zwingli, he did not go far enough to satisfy some of the more radical leaders. Zwingli wanted a state church. He wanted to reform the old church and tolerated all members who had held membership in the old church. This did not satisfy the more radical leaders. They wanted a church free

from the state which should be of believers only. Such men as Balthasar Hubmeier, a preacher in Waldshut and Carlstatt who had come from Wittenberg urged more radical reforms. They began to doubt infant baptism and by 1524 such men as Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, George Blaurock and Wilhelm Reublin came to the same conclusion. By the middle of December, 1524, these men began rebaptizing. George Blaurock was baptized by Conrad Grebel and he in turn baptized others.

The real movement of Anabaptism, however, arose as a result of public debates held on infant baptism in 1525. These debates were held in January, March and June of this year. Soon after these debates the civil authorities ordered all children to be baptized. The Anabaptists refused and as a result persecution of the Anabaptists began. The reason these people were called Anabaptists or "Wiedertäufers" is because they emphasized the re-baptizing of individuals. This was not a new doctrine. Peter Debruys in the beginning of the twelfth century did not believe in infant baptism and the Petrobrusians re-baptized those that had been baptized as infants. In 1467 the Bohemian brethren re-baptized all of their members. After the first disputation held in January, 1525, all children were to be baptized within eight days. The Anabaptists refused and were persecuted. Second disputation was held March 20, 1525. As a result of this disputation the Anabaptists were imprisoned and fed on bread and water until they should be willing to give up. Grebel, Manz and Blaurock escaped by a rope. The third disputation was held June 5, 1525. As a result many Anabaptists were thrown into prison. From 1525 to 1535 the persecutions were very severe and many of the Swiss Anabaptists were exterminated. They were thrown into boiling water, burned at the stake and thrown into rivers. These Anabaptists were not entirely a group of ignorant and fanatical people. Conrad Grebel was a member of an eminent patrician family of Zurich, Felix Manz was a scholarly Hebraist, the son of a Zurich Canon; Carlstatt was a teacher in Wittenberg University and Hubmaier was a professor in Ingolstatt University.

Because of persecution many of the Anabaptists left Switzerland and fled to Southern Germany. Here again they were persecuted and fled to Northern Germany. There were two very noted results of these persecutions. In the first place it made the movement spread very rapidly and in the second place people became more radical and fanatical. This constant persecution made them despair of any hope in this world and led them to the expectancy of a speedy coming of Christ and the establishment of a millennial kingdom on earth. The Münster revolution in Northern Germany is a result of this fanaticism. Dr. Dosker says: "The sheep were without a shepherd, and hundreds of them preferred exile and a foreign home to the hopeless memories of the past and the dreary outlook for the future. Can we wonder that in this night of gloom, the star of chiliastic expectations began to twinkle; that what little of Munzerism had found lodgment in the hearts of the Anabaptists should now assert itself in a violent reaction against the unbearable conditions under which they lived? By 1530 the fate of the upper German Anabaptists was settled. Torn asunder, scattered, all but annihilated, the surviving brethren led a pitiable life. In remote corners, under the shadows of the forest and in the dead of night, the survivors met in sad conventicles and in sorrowful commemoration kept alive the names of those who had died for a common cause."[6]

As the Anabaptist movement went from Southern Germany to Northern Germany it became an extremely radical movement. Persecution led to this radicalism. The fruitage is seen in the Münster revolution. This revolution was from 1533-1535. It stands between the rise of Anabaptism in Switzerland and the organization of the peaceful Anabaptists in the Netherlands. It changed the whole course of Anabaptist history. The early leader of this movement was Melchior Hoffman. In 1529 Hoffman became an Anabaptist in Strassburg and began to claim prophetic inspiration. He opposed the incarnation of Christ and taught a visible reign of Christ. He was expelled from

6. Dosker, The Dutch Anabaptists, pp. 39, 40.

Strassburg because of his radical teaching and fled to Holland. Here he taught Anabaptist views which later influenced peaceful Anabaptists of Friesland who became Mennonites. He returned to Strassburg having received a vision that Strassburg was to be the new Jerusalem where he as the prophet should suffer imprisonment six months and then the end of the world would come and all who opposed him and his people should be destroyed. He went to Strassburg with this hope and was imprisoned which he interpreted as the beginning of the millennial reign. He died in prison in 1543 and his kingdom went to pieces. But Hoffman's apocalyptic preaching won converts in Netherlands and in Münster. In Netherlands Jan Mathys, a baker of Harlem, accepted Hoffman's views and called himself the prophet Enoch and spread a fanatic propaganda through the Netherlands and Northern Germany. Mathys believed that the kingdom of God should be inaugurated by force. Strassburg was now rejected because of the many unbelievers and Münster was selected as the new Jerusalem. Mathys sent John of Leyden in 1534 to become the leader in Münster. Mathys came soon after and made himself the ruler. Anabaptists fled to this city from all directions and the city came entirely under the control of these radicals. Polygamy was established and communism was introduced. All those that opposed this organization were called godless and were killed. These fanatical chiliastic people held control of the city for two years. The bishop of Münster aided by Catholic and Lutheran troops besieged the city and captured it on June 24, 1535. The leaders were killed and many of the Anabaptists. Some of them, however, fled to the Netherlands.

The effects of this tragedy were very unfortunate for the whole group of Anabaptists. Persecutions became most severe. The sincere and honest Anabaptists were killed as well as the radicals. Thousands of the Anabaptists, innocent of any participation in the Münster revolution, even abhorring it, yet on account of having the same name received the same condemnation. The Anabaptists of Switzerland and Germany con-

demned the Münsterites very severely. Many in Northern Germany and the Netherlands bitterly denounced these fanatics and retained their peaceful non-resistance. Yet even today many people judge the whole Anabaptist movement by this radical millennial group.

The Anabaptist movement now went to the Netherlands. The Netherlands was prepared for the coming of the Anabaptists in the fact that in 1524 the Bible was translated into the Dutch language; the teachings of the Waldenses and the brethren of the common life were promulgated and in 1532 and 1533 Melchior Hoffman had traveled through Friesland, making many disciples. Netherlands was under the control of Spain and Margaret of Austria was the governor. Under her rule the new doctrines of the Reformation found ready acceptance and Friesland particularly became a refuge for persecuted evangelical people. The Bible was circulated and studied. As a result of the work of Hoffman a number of Anabaptists were found particularly in Friesland. Dirck and Obbe Phillips and Leonard Bouwens of Emden in East Friesland refused to follow the radical Anabaptists and became the leaders of the peaceful non-resistant Anabaptists of Friesland. Here it was where Menno Simon came in touch with the Anabaptist movement.

CHAPTER III

MENNO SIMON AND MENNONITES

The person who did more than anyone else in organizing the peaceful Anabaptists in the Netherlands was Menno Simon from whom the Mennonites received their name. He was born in Witmarsum, a small village not far from the sea in Friesland, in the year 1496. Very little is known of his early life except that he was trained for the priesthood in the Catholic Church. In 1524 at the age of twenty-eight he became a priest at Pinjum, a small town not far from Witmarsum.

There were two experiences in the life of Menno Simon that had much to do with his conversion from a Catholic to an Anabaptist. The first was an inward experience. He says that while he was officiating as a priest in the communion after a year of service the thought came to him that the bread and wine in the mass were not the flesh and blood of the Lord. He says: "I thought that it was the suggestion of the devil that he might lead me off from my faith. I confessed it often—sighed and prayed—yet I could not be free from this thought."[1] Menno Simon as many other priests of that day had not read the Scriptures. He says: "I had not touched them during my life, for I feared if I should read them they would mislead me. Behold, such a stupid preacher was I for nearly two years."[2] He spent his time with two other young men in the ministry in playing and drinking. When this experience came to Menno in relation to communion he spoke to his pastor but he scoffed him. Menno then began to read the New Testament. He also read Luther's interpretation of communion.

The second experience that came to him that changed his position was the result of an outward event. In March, 1531, a tailor, Sicke Frerichs, was beheaded at Leeuwarden because he was rebaptized. This seemed strange to Menno Simon that

1. Menno Simon—Complete Works, p. 3.
2. Ibid, p. 3.

a man should be rebaptized and he began studying infant baptism. He first searched the Scriptures but could not find anything concerning infant baptism. He then studied the views of other reformers and had personal interviews with Luther and Melanchthon in Wittenberg; with Bullinger at Zurich and with Bucer at Strassburg. He says that after consulting these men and reading the Scriptures he found that they were wrong in relation to infant baptism and that the Scripture did not teach it. All the reformers had given him different answers. Shortly after this experience he went to Witmarsum as a priest. Menno describes his experience here the first few years as follows: "Covetousness and desire to attain a great name, were the inducements which lead me to that place. There I spoke much concerning the word of the Lord, without spirituality or love, as all hypocrites do, and by this means I made disciples of my own stamp, such as vain boasters and light minded babblers, who, alas like myself, cared but little about these matters. Although I had now acquired considerable knowledge of the Scriptures, yet I wasted that knowledge through the lusts of my youth in an impure, sensual, unprofitable life without any fruits, and sought nothing but gain, ease, favor of men, splendor, reputation and honor, as all generally do who embark in the same ship."[3]

In the second year of his ministry at Witmarsum another event occurred which made him make his final decision. In February, 1535, a party of fanatical Anabaptists, who had escaped from Münster, took refuge in the old cloister near Menno's home, called "Oude Klooster". Here they were besieged and nearly all of them killed. Among those killed was Menno's own brother. This made a very deep impression on Menno Simon and aroused his conscience. This event seemed to be the turning point in Menno's career. He says that before this event Anabaptists had come to him and spoken to him concerning baptism. Some of the Anabaptists in Netherlands were led into error by these fanatics from Münster. Menno opposed

3. Menno Simon, Complete Works, p. 4.

MENNO SIMON
1496-1561

them very much because they used the sword to defend themselves. But Menno says they were a poor straying flock without a shepherd and although their blood was shed in error he saw that they were zealous and willing to give their lives for their doctrines and faith. The crisis in Menno's life as a result of this episode can best be stated in his own words: "I thought to myself—I a miserable man, what shall I do? If I continue in this way and live not agreeably to the Word of the Lord, according to the knowledge of the truth which I have obtained: if I do not rebuke to the best of my limited ability the hypocrisy, the impenitent, carnal life, the perverted baptism, the Lord's Supper and the false worship of God, which the learned teach; if I through bodily fear do not show them the true foundation of the truth, neither use all my powers to direct the wandering flock, who would gladly do their duty if they knew it, to the true pastures of Christ—oh, how shall their shed blood, though shed in error, rise against me at the judgment of the Almighty, and pronounce sentence against my poor and miserable soul."[4]

He now began to preach repentance. His conversion had taken place. He began to instruct the peaceful group of Anabaptists. He took the final step in January, 1536, and openly renounced the Catholic Church. One day while he was reading the Word of God and writing, a small group of Anabaptist leaders came to him and asked him to become their leader or bishop. He left his home town and moved to the province of Gronningen, where in the early part of 1537 he formally allied himself with the Anabaptists. He was baptized at Leeuwarden and later ordained to the ministry. This decision of Menno Simon to ally himself with the Anabaptists required a great deal of sacrifice and courage. Dr. Smith says: "To come to this decision required no small degree of physical and moral courage. Unlike Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, all of whom gained positions of great power, comfort and influence through their

4. Menno Simon, Complete Works, p. 5.

separation from Romanism, Menno, by espousing the cause of the common people and religious freedom, entered upon a career that promised nothing but humiliation, poverty and persecution."[5]

Some people have the impression that all of the Anabaptists belonged to the radical, fanatical group as is represented by the Münsterites and that Menno Simon became the leader of this type of Anabaptists, but it should be noted that Menno Simon was not in sympathy with the radical chiliastic Anabaptists. He wrote and preached against their views. He was asked to be an elder of a peace-loving, non-resistant group of Anabaptists. It must always be remembered that Anabaptism was not an organized movement. It was mass movement. Dr. Jones says: "Anabaptism was never a single coherent clearly organized movement. It lacked form, settled authority and corporate wisdom. It was always at the mercy and caprice of its local leaders and the conditions which happened to prevail when and where it emerged. The entire movement suffered terribly from the blunders of the few, and, as usual the world accepted hostile propaganda as though it were truth."[6] There were about forty different sects of Anabaptists and Menno Simon became the leader of the peaceful type. Professor Walker says: The Anabaptist movement itself, especially in the Netherlands, came under the wise, peace-loving, anti-fanatical leadership of Menno Simon, to whom its worthy organization was primarily due and from whom the term Mennonite is derived."[7]

Menno's work as an Anabaptist leader consisted chiefly in the organizing of new churches and the reviving of old ones and in writing in defense of the Anabaptist faith. His writings are polemical and apologetic. He traveled a great deal throughout the Netherlands and Northern Germany in spite of severe

5. Smith, The Mennonites, p. 46.
6. Jones, The Church's Debt to Heretics, pp. 236, 237.
7. Walker, A History of the Christian Church, p. 375.

persecutions. A price was set on his head and people were granted special privileges for betraying him to the authorities. The first seven years of his ministry he labored in Gronningen. In 1543 he left Holland and fled to Cologne to escape persecution. In 1546 he was compelled to leave Cologne and fled to Wismar in Mecklenberg where he stayed until 1555. His last refuge was at Wuestenfeld between Lubeck and Hamburg. He died January 13, 1561, and was buried in his own garden. Menno's influence among the Anabaptists as a leader was so great that by 1544 Countess Anne of Friesland referred to his followers as Mennists, or followers of Menno. By the time of his death not only the Anabaptists of the Netherlands but those of Germany and Switzerland as well were called Mennonites.

Menno Simon was not the founder of a new religious group but rather the organizer of a movement which was found in Europe. Dr. Smith states the contribution of Menno Simon to the Christian Church and the world very well when he says: "Menno Simon deserves a higher rank among the great reformers than has thus far been accorded him by writers of church history. Although he did not play as conspicuous a role as did his contemporaries,—Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin— his real greatness cannot be measured by the humble part he seemed to play upon the religious arena of his time. His task was in many respects a much more difficult one than that of the founders of the state churches. They relied upon a union of state and church and upon the support of the strong arm of the temporal powers to maintain their system. Menno on the other hand appealed to the force of love and simple truth of the gospel as vital enough to secure the permanency of the true church. Menno and his co-workers were centuries ahead of their day on many of the great fundamentals of religious and civil liberty which today in America and the more enlightened portions of Europe are taken for granted such as religious toleration, separation of church and state and the desirability at least of universal peace. As the world grows into a reali-

zation of these great fundamental truths, Menno Simon's place as a pioneer will become more and more secure."[8]

THE MENNONITES OF EUROPE

The history of the followers of Menno in Europe for the next two centuries is largely a record of cruelty and persecution on the one hand and the peaceful and patient suffering of the Mennonites on the other. They fled from country to country and from province to province in Germany, seeking a place of refuge. They were sometimes promised freedom in various provinces and countries only to find after being there for some time that they were again to be persecuted. By the time of the seventeenth century Mennonites were found in the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, parts of France and Alsace Lorraine.

Since the persecutions of the Anabaptists and early Mennonites were due to their religious views it may be well to state briefly the tenets of their faith. These fundamental principles of the Anabaptists and Mennonites are becoming more significant as time goes on. Professor Vedder called the Anabaptist movement a radical reformation. Dr. Harnack used to say in his classroom they were three hundred years ahead of their time![9] Professor Vedder further says that the time is rapidly approaching when the Anabaptists will be as abundantly honored as in the past four centuries they have been unjustly condemned. The people in the past have looked on the Anabaptists with reproach and have argued that the Münsterite group is an illustration of what they all would do if they had a chance. One writer describes them as a people who claimed a superior holiness and looked with unconcealed contempt on other churches and emphasized no church, no education, no Jesus and no Bible but that the Holy Ghost reveals to them a superior knowledge which is above the Bible or the church

8. Smith, The Mennonites, pp. 56-57.
9. Dosker, The Dutch Anabaptists, pp. 1-2.

or the thought of man. This is a statement which may be true of the fanatical chiliastic group. They even went so far as to believe in polygamy and the sword but the statement is untrue when it is to be applied to all of the Anabaptists or to the early Mennonites. The fundamental tenets of the Anabaptists and Mennonites were these: they believed in the complete separation of church and state. As a result of this belief they refused to take oaths; take part in military affairs and to hold office in the government. They were opposed to a state church and the baptizing of infants. They set up a new church with adult believers only, baptized on confession of faith. They emphasized regeneration, a new life in Christ and insisted on an imitation of Christ in the life of self-denial. They believed in simplicity of worship, church organization and in life. The sermon was the main feature of their service. They believed in the congregational form of church government. They believed in the supremacy of the Scriptures as a rule of faith and practise. Kessler says: "The walk of the Anabaptists was pious, holy and blameless. They refrained from wearing costly apparel, despised luxurious eating and drinking, clothed themselves in rough cloth and wore slouch hats." Franck says they refused to frequent wine shops and the guild rooms where dances were held. They taught the symbolic idea of bread and wine in the communion. One word which characterized the Anabaptists and Mennonites more than any other was individualism. It is not difficult to see why these people were persecuted in the sixteenth century when society was organized on a military basis and the churches were all a part of the state. Their principles, however, of separation of church and state, a regenerate life and the doctrine of peace have become a vital part of the teachings of the Christian church in America.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AMISH.

Although the name Mennonite has been given to the Central Conference Mennonite Church, the large majority of the membership is Amish. Sixteen of the twenty-nine congregations are Amish while the other thirteen have a membership of Amish and Mennonites. The church originated among the Amish people of Central Illinois, so it is significant to raise the question from whence come the Amish.

THE AMISH OF EUROPE

There was not only opposition from without but also a serious division within the Mennonite Church. The spirit of individualism which they prized so highly caused considerable difficulty in the harmonizing of their own views. The most serious faction was the one led by Jacob Amman. He was a Mennonite minister in the Emmenthal congregation in the Canton of Bern, Switzerland. He believed that the church was too liberal in its discipline, especially in relation to the ban. The Mennonite churches in Switzerland had only observed shunning in relation to the communion privileges but Amman would now extend this to all social, business and even domestic relations. He also introduced among his followers the use of hooks and eyes instead of buttons on men's clothes. The wearing of beards and long hair also came to have religious significance. He introduced the practise of feet-washing in connection with communion service, a practise which had been neglected by the Swiss for some time.

The leader of the more liberal group in Switzerland and the chief opponent of Amman was Hans Reist. The feeling between these two parties became very bitter which resulted in bitter discussion and many conferences. Finally in 1693 Jacob Amman and his group separated from the Mennonite

church in Switzerland and formed a new organization. Amman placed the Reist people under a ban while Reist retaliated with the same measure. In 1700 Amman attempted to be reconciled to Reist but Reist refused and so the division remained. The followers of Jacob Amman were now called Amish. They soon left Switzerland and went to Alsace Lorraine and different parts of Germany. From here many of them came to America.

THE AMISH OF AMERICA

The date of the coming of the first Amish to America is not quite certain. A few may have come over before 1727. It is supposed that Barbara Yoder, the great-grandmother of Rev. Jonathan Yoder, came in 1720. If this is correct, she is one of the first Amish to come to America. The first real immigration, however, was between 1727-1750. The Zug brothers arrived in Philadelphia in 1742; Peter Jutzy in 1744; Jacob Hartzler in 1749 and Nicholas Stoltzfus in 1756. Most of these Amish came from Alsace Lorraine and the Palatinate. The two most important pioneer settlements made in the east were in Pennsylvania, the one in the northwest corner of Berks County and the other in Lancaster County at the head waters of the Conestoga. From these two settlements most of the later ones in Pennsylvania and the western states were made.

Concerning the early history of the Amish people Dr. Smith says: "Of the early history of these people we know very little except that they were extremely conservative in their religious customs, simple in their tastes and habits and generally prosperous. They never erected a general church building, but worshipped in private houses. In their every day life they had to meet the usual hardships of the frontiersman"[1] There are only about twenty-five family names of the Amish in America. Some of the characteristic names are Yoder, Zook, Mast, Plank, Stoltzfus, Stutzman, Hooley, Byler, Koenig, Beechy, Miller, Hostetler, Kauffman, Jutzi, Troyer, Umble, Kanagy, Hartz-

1. Smith, The Mennonites of America, pp. 212-213.

ler, Lapp, Hershberger, Smucker and a few others. Of these the following are significant in the settlements of Central Illinois: Yoder, Zook. Stutzman, King, Kauffman, Jutzi and Troyer.

The expansion of the Amish in America to the West was at first from the parent settlements in Berks and Lancaster Counties. From these original settlements the counties of Sommerset, Westmoreland, Mifflin and Juniata were settled. The first two Amish settlements west of Pittsburg and in the state of Ohio were made by settlers from Sommerset and Mifflin Counties. The first Amish settlement west of Pittsburg and in Ohio was at Sugarcreek in Tuscarawas County by Rev. Jacob Miller who came from Sommerset County in 1808. The second Amish settlement was made in Wayne County when Jacob Yoder of Mifflin County moved there. These Pennsylvania colonies also established settlements in Holmes, Logan, Champaign and Geauga Counties in Ohio and also Elkhart and Lagrange Counties in the northern part of Indiana by 1840. It is to be noted that thus far all of the new colonies have been started by the Amish in America.

The third settlement in Ohio introduced new blood from Europe. The European Amish immigration from 1820-1860 came from Southern Germany and Alsace Lorraine. "They came to America to better their economic conditions, to escape military service and to seek for religious liberty and freedom of conscience."[2] The Napoleonic wars had brought a great deal of economic oppression and also pressed many of the younger men into military service.

The pioneer in this new Amish immigration was Christian Augspurger from near Strassburg in Alsace Lorraine. In 1817 he came to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He came west in 1818, down the Ohio and up the Miami River to what is now Butler County. Becoming discouraged because he was alone he returned to Alsace Lorraine. In the spring of 1819 he came to America again, bringing with him about thirty-six other families. In August, 1819, Christian

2. Hartzler, Education among the Mennonites of America, pp. 25-26-27.

Augspurger, with five other families, came west and located in Butler County. The other five were his brother Joseph, his cousin, Jacob, Christ Sommer, John Miller and John Gunden.[3] From 1819-1830 came the Imhoffs, Nofsingers, Kennels, Strubhars, Rev. Christian Reeser, Nicholas Maurer, Peter Maurer and Peter Stuckey, all from Alsace Lorraine. All that came to Butler County thus far were Amish.

In 1832 a new group of people came from Hesse, Germany. These were Mennonites and were more liberal in their views than the Amish of Butler County. These were called by the Amish, Hessian Mennonites. Some of the leading families of the Hessian Mennonites in Butler County were Jutzi, Hooley, Kinsinger, Nofsinger, Brenneman, Kennel, Gingerich, Sommer, Donner, Schoenbeck, Birkey, and Schertz. There was soon disagreement between the Hessian and the Amish particularly as to the use of musical instruments in the home and the matter of customs in dress.[4] The Amish wore hooks and eyes on their clothes while the Hessians wore buttons. These differences culminated in a division in 1835, the Amish being led by Rev. Jacob Augspurger and the Hessian Mennonites by Rev. Peter Nafsiger called the "Apostle". From these two groups of Amish and Hessian Mennonites of Butler County came many of the settlers of McLean County.

Since the Central Conference Mennonite Church originated in Central Illinois it is particularly important to note the territories from which the early Amish settlers of Central Illinois came. The territories in order of their importance are Butler County, Ohio; Alsace Lorraine, Hesse Palatinate and other provinces in Germany, Pennsylvania and counties in Ohio and Switzerland. Most of the settlers along the Illinois River and Woodford and Tazewell Counties came directly from Alsace Lorraine. Between 1840-1860 quite a large number of Amish settlers came to Central Illinois from the counties of Mifflin

3. Grubb, The Mennonites of Butler County, Ohio. p. 11.
4. Smith, Mennonites of America, p. 219.

and Somerset in Pennsylvania. In the '60's and '70's a few families came directly from Switzerland.

AMISH SETTLEMENTS IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS

The next territory included in the expansion of the Amish after Ohio and Indiana is Illinois. The first Amish came to the central part of Illinois, including the counties of McLean, Woodford, Tazewell and Livingston. The first Amish of which there is any record to come to central Illinois was Peter Maurer. He settled in McLean County near what is now Rock Creek fair grounds, five miles north of Danvers, in 1829. Mr. Maurer came from Alsace to Butler County, Ohio, in 1827, and two years later came to McLean County, Illinois. In 1830 two young men, John Strubhar and Nicholas Maurer, walked all the way from Butler County to McLean County. John Strubhar took a claim and settled in what is now Danvers Township. Nicholas Maurer crossed the line into Woodford County and took a claim a mile north of Congerville. These three are the first Amish or Mennonites to be found in Central Illinois and the first Amish to be found west of the state of Ohio. By 1832 the great migrations to Central Illinois began. From 1832 to 1850 most of the Amish came. These early settlers took the cheap land along the rivers and groves. Amish settlements were made along the Illinois River in Woodford County and along the Mackinaw from 1830-1836. By 1836 you find the following families along the Illinois River: David Schertz, Peter Engel, Sr., John and Rev. Christ Engel, Joseph Bachman, the Beck brothers, George Sommers, Peter Roche, Peter Gingerich, John Miller, the Snyders and John Sweitzer. Along the Mackinaw we find Peter and Christ Farni, Joe Gingerich, the Zehrs and Christ and Andrew Ropp.

In 1837 Peter Donner, Sr., and family came from Butler County, Ohio, in a wagon and settled in Dry Grove, a few miles east of Danvers. This was the first Amish family in Dry Grove Township. In the same year Valentine and

Peter Strubhar, with their mother and Rev. Michael Kinsinger, came from Butler County to Danvers Township. Between 1840-1855 came the Engels, Rev. Michael Kistler, Ottos, Stuckeys, Kauffmans, Swartzentrubers, Troyers, Garbers, Habeckers, and others. Between 1848-1854 Pennsylvania furnished a number of Amish settlers such as the Yoders,—in 1848 came Elias Yoder and Amos Yoder, sons of Rev. Jonathan Yoder, also a brother of Rev. Yoder, Joe Yoder—, Lantzs, Sharps and Stutzmans. Solomon Lantz came in 1850, also John Sharp and his sons Peter and Jonathan. In 1851 Rev. Jonathan Yoder came from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, and settled in Dry Grove Township. A little later came also the Pattons, Zooks and Yoders from Ohio, and Lantzs, Planks, Stutzmans and Kings from Pennsylvania. Between 1850-1860 came the Millers, Nafsigers, Bastings, Redigers, Stalters and Kennels mostly from Butler County or direct from Europe. In 1861-1865 came the Stahlys to Livingston and McLean Counties. Also by 1874 the Ummels, Kohlers and Verclers.[5]

5. These names and dates have been gathered from County Atlases, Albums, Historical Records, Obituaries, Family Records and private interviews with early settlers.

CHAPTER V

THE AMISH IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS, 1829-1860.

The geographic environment of man as well as the social environment is an important factor in determining his life and activities. In a history of the Amish in Central Illinois it is important to study the geographic conditions of this territory. It affected the Amish both in determining the location of their settlements as well as their life and activities after they had settled in Central Illinois. The social environment also plays a large part in determining the life of these people.

GEOGRAPHIC CONDITIONS.

The first geographic condition which aided in settlement is the natural highways. The state of Illinois is bounded on the south by the Ohio River, on the west by the Mississippi, and the Illinois flows through the north and central part of the state. This river forms the western boundary of Tazewell and Woodford Counties. McLean and Livingston border on these two counties. These rivers formed a natural highway for the Amish settlers as they came from New Orleans in the South or from Pennsylvania in the East.

Another important geographic condition is the character of the land. Central Illinois has a vast stretch of high, undulating prairie land with streams, occasional groves and belts of timber. McLean County alone had about seven thousand acres of forest growth in the form of belts of timber along the creeks and occasional groves. There were about forty-four groves in the county. Some of the most important in which the Amish settled were Stouts, Dry, Twin, Mosquito and White Oak. The largest wooded region in these four counties was along the Mackinaw River. These groves and wooded streams were the places first sought by the settlers as they came to the central

part of Illinois. The large tracts of prairie land with its fertile, brown loam soil brought to Central Illinois an agricultural people.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COUNTIES.

Central Illinois lies in the heart of the Mississippi Valley. It was at one time a part of the Northwest Territory. A complete history of this section would include a discussion of its possession by the Indians, discoveries made by the French missionaries and fur traders such as Joliet, Marquette and LaSalle and also the conflict between England and France in the French and Indian War. The English gained control of the territory in 1763. George Rogers Clark took the territory from the Engglish and gave it to Virginia in 1778. Virginia gave it to the United States in 1784. A government was provided by the Ordinances of 1784 and 1787. The Ordinance of 1787 was particularly significant because of its anti-slavery clause and its provision for free schools. In 1809 the territory which is now Illinois was organized into what was called the Illinois Territory. On April 13, 1818, Illinois was admitted into the Union as a state with a population of forty-five thousand. At this time the white settlements were all in the southern part of the state. The capital at first was at Kaskaskia and later at Vandalia. The central part of Illinois was still uninhabitated except as someone has said by the deer, wolves, rattlesnakes and Indians. The leading tribes of Indians of this part of Illinois were the Delawares, Pottowatomies, Kickapoos and Illinois. The state received its name from the Illinois tribe, Illinois meaning "superior men". In 1819 a treaty was made at Vincennes by which the Indians gave up claims to the territory of Illinois. By 1829 practically all the Indians had left the territory and it was now ready for white settlement.

Of the four counties that now comprise Central Illinois, McLean is the oldest. It is the largest county in the state and the third wealthiest in the United States. When Illinois became

a state in 1818 McLean County was a part of Clark and Bond Counties, the third meridian being the dividing line. The territory east of this line was in Clark County and the west in Bond. In 1821 the west was in Sangamon County and the east in Fayette County. In 1827 the west was in Tazewell County and the east in Vermillion County. On Christmas Day, 1830, McLean County was formed by an act of legislature. It was named McLean in honor of Senator John McLean who died in 1830. At the date of its organization it was much larger than it is now. It included parts of what are now Livingston, DeWitt and Woodford Counties. It had 1200 people in 1830. Tazewell County was organized in 1827 and named in honor of Governor Tazewell of Virginia. Livingston County was organized in 1837 and Woodford County in 1841. Livingston County took nine and one-half townships from the northeast corner of McLean; DeWitt took four and two-thirds townships from the south end of McLean and Woodford took nine townships from the northwest corner. This left the county with its present dimensions. These are the four counties which became the home of the Amish as they came from the East and from Europe.

EARLY SETTLEMENTS.

It shall be the purpose of this section to show how the early settlements of other white people in Central Illinois compare with the early settlements of the Amish in this same territory. Only those sections will be named where the Amish are found. The two earliest white settlements in these counties were made in Woodford and McLean. The first white man in Central Illinois and in all the territory between Peoria and Chicago was a Mr. Blaylock. He came into Woodford County with his family and settled in the region of Spring Bay along the Illinois River in 1819. He lived in Indian fashion and spent his time hunting and fishing. The first permanent white settlement was made in McLean County in April, 1822, when John Hendricks and family of Virginia located in a grove about

four miles southeast of what is now Bloomington. This was later called Blooming Grove. John W. Dawson and family of Kentucky came to the same place in 1822. In December, 1822, Gardener Randolph and family came to a grove later called Randolph Grove. In 1823 the Stringfields came to the same place. In 1822 William Blanchard from Vermont came along the Illinois River and began to farm in what is now Tazewell County, a mile or two from the Woodford County line. In 1823 a Mr. Darby built his cabin near Spring Bay in Woodford County and began farming. These are the first permanent white settlements in Central Illinois.

In 1823 the Orendorfs came to Blooming Grove and in 1824 Rev. Ebenezer Rhodes, the Hodges, the Walkers and others came to the same place. By the end of 1824 there were twelve families settled in Blooming Grove. In 1824 Absalom and Isaac Funk and William Brock came to a grove, later called Funk's Grove in McLean County. The first white people to come to Dry Grove in McLean County were a Mr. Smith and Peter McCullough in 1826. In 1827 Stephen Webb and in 1828 Henry VanSickles came to the same place. The first white people making settlements along the Mackinaw were the Henline's and Robert and Samuel Phillips, in the years 1827-28-29. In the fall of 1825 Ephraim Stout and his son, Quakers from Tennessee, came to Stouts Grove. This grove is in Danvers Township near the town of Danvers. In 1827 Matthew Robb, the McClures and the Hodges also came to Stouts Grove. By 1830 there were white settlers found in practically all of the leading groves of McLean County and also along the Mackinaw and Illinois Rivers in Woodford County. There were, however, less than two people to the square mile in these counties of Central Illinois. Peoria was laid out in 1826 and Bloomington was a town of six or eight stores in 1837. This survey reveals the fact that from 1822 to 1829 there were no Amish settlements in Central Illinois but it also reveals the fact that seven years after the first white man came to Central Illinois, the first Amish came here in the person of Peter Maurer.

THE PIONEER LIFE.

Since the economic, intellectual and social activities of a people have a great effect upon their religious life it is important to consider in a brief way these activities among the Amish in Central Illinois. The date 1860 marks somewhat the dividing line between the pioneer life of the Amish and the modern life with its inventions and modern conveniences. These settlers as they came from Europe usually left their homes because of economic, political and religious oppression. So they were willing to endure many hardships in the new country in order that they might have freedom. Many of the Amish, when they came to Pennsylvania, found that the land had already been occupied and that they needed to seek homes farther west. This accounted for the migrations to Ohio, Indiana and later Illinois. By 1840 most of the land in Butler County had been taken, the settlers looked for cheaper land farther west. A number of the Amish people that came to Central Illinois lived in Butler County only a few years, just long enough to earn enough money to move farther west. Quite often young men would come into this new territory, take up a claim and then go back to Butler County to seek for one to share with them in this new land the blessings as well as the hardships of life. This western land was also advertised very freely in the East. Pamphlets were circulated in the eastern states about the great resourses of the Middle West. The earliest pioneers also wrote back to their friends both in America and Europe inviting them to come. By 1840 the rush for Illinois was on. The settlers came on private steamboats on the Ohio, Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Some came on horseback; some on foot, some with ox-teams and others in large conestoga wagons drawn by horses. The early settlers often had to live in their wagons or in hastily built log cabins until more substantial houses could be built.

The first land chosen by the early Amish settlers as they came was along the rivers and creeks, the timber land and the groves. They came from a country of hills and creeks and rivers

bordered with timber land and so they naturally settled along the rivers and groves in Central Illinois. They looked upon the prairie land as a desert waste. They did not believe that it would ever be settled. Another reason for them settling in the timberlands was the fact that they sought protection from the storms and wild animals; it was easier to get fuel and water. They could plow the timber land soil with two horses and their primitive plows while the prairie sod was tough and difficult to turn. The prairies were not drained so there were many sloughs and ponds. Timberland seemed so important that even the government provided that in every ten acres of prairie land taken by the settlers there should be one acre of timberland. Very little of the prairie was claimed before 1853.

The early settlers had many handicaps in their efforts to make a living. Their methods of farming were very crude. Their corn which was the main crop was planted by hand and hoed. Their harvesting was done by hand. On the other hand there were many hindrances to their farming; prairie fires sometimes broke out and burned their fences, their fields of corn and their stacks of hay. If the wind was very strong it was almost impossible to stop the fire. One settler tells of a fire that traveled eight miles in twenty minutes.

Another difficulty the early settlers encountered was the marketing of their produce The early farmers had one hundred and twenty miles to the nearest mill, at Attica, Indiana, on the Wabash River. The people of Woodford County along the Illinois hauled their grain to Chicago which meant a ten-day trip. The cattle had to be driven to market either to Pekin, Peoria or Chicago. The Amish introduced the first wagons into Central Illinois which were so much needed in the transportation of their grain.

The settlers lived a very simple life. They lived largely on game, milk and cornflour. They made their own shoes and clothes. They lived in log cabins where oiled paper served as windows and a ladder was used to go to bed in the loft. Often these cabins had no other floor than the ground. One of the

early ministers of our church erected a log cabin sixteen by eighteen feet, dividing it in two rooms and the ground served as the floor. Here he raised his family. Diseases were very prevalent due to the sloughs and ponds and wet marshy prairies. Many lost their lives because of these diseases. The one that was perhaps the most prevalent was the ague or "shittel fever" as the German called it.

It is a significant fact that wherever the Amish went, schools were established for their children and churches for worship. In this the Amish of Central Illinois had selected a favorable territory. The Ordinance of 1787 provided that section sixteen of every township should be used for school purposes. This encouraged the public school system of the Middle West. On the other hand there were also handicaps in relation to the educating of their children. In the first place they were a farming people and so they needed the help of every boy and girl that was able to work except through the few winter months so the length of the term was usually three or four months. In the second place practically all of the schools from 1830 to 1850 were private schools. They were called subscription schools and tuition had to be paid by the pupils. Although a law was established in 1825 providing for free schools, there were only twenty-six free schools in McLean County in 1850. It was in 1855 before a good school law was passed providing for supported schools by taxation. The chief reason for this situation was lack of money. The townships recklessly sold the land in section sixteen very cheap. Land was often sold for seventy cents an acre. This did not provide sufficient funds for the support of the schools. Most of the early schools in the Amish settlements were for the purpose of teaching German as this was the language used in their churches. The Amish were not interested in higher education. They were an agricultural people and did not believe that it was necessary to have higher education to engage in farming. Their young people very seldom took up other occupations or professional work.

With all the hardships and handicaps of the early pioneers

their life was not all one of drudgery and reverses. The early settlers found a great deal of enjoyment in their pioneer life. They had their social gatherings which furnished them enjoyment and developed the community spirit. They had their barn and house raising which not only helped the farmers erect his buildings but also provided social enjoyment for the neighborhood. The spirit of helpfulness was very prominent among these settlers. Spelling schools were held which were an occasion for the development of social life. A great deal of visiting was done by the various families and communities. Church services were held only every two weeks. This gave them every other Sunday for visiting. The Amish people were a very hospitable people and entertained their company in a very creditable manner.

THE CHURCH LIFE.

The most important institution in the life of the Amish in Central Illinois was the church. These Amish pioneers were not only interested in the making of a living but were also interested in the making of a life. Wherever there were a sufficient number of people in a community a church was organized. As early as 1833 church services were held in the Spring Bay settlement in Woodford County with Rev. Christian Engel as their first minister. This was the second church to be organized in Woodford County, the first one having been established by the Christian Church in Walnut Grove, now Eureka, Illinois, August 9, 1832[1]. The Amish church at Spring Bay was the first Amish church organized in the state of Illinois. The church services of the Amish up to 1853 were held in the homes. They were usually all day services, that is forenoon and afternoon. A lunch was served at the noon hour. This made the Sunday services not only valuable as a religious factor but also helped to develop social life of the people. The second Amish church

1. Received the information concerning the First Christian Church in Woodford County from Professor B. J. Radford, Eureka, Illinois. His wife's grandfather was one of the first deacons in this church.

AUGSPURGER MEETING HOUSE
Built in 1863, Butler Co., Ohio

HESSIAN MEETING HOUSE
1864, Butler Co., Ohio.

to be organized was in the settlement along the Mackinaw River in Woodford County. The first ministers in the Mackinaw Church were Christian Ropp who came to the Mackinaw settlement in 1836 and Daniel Zehr. Later in 1858 Rev. Christian Reeser came.[2] A number of the Amish families from Danvers and Dry Grove Townships in McLean County attended the Mackinaw services for a number of years. Up to 1850 there was no Amish congregation in McLean County.

Another early congregation that was formed was the Hessian Mennonite congregation of Dry Grove and Danvers Townships. Some of the Hessian families mentioned in connection with the history of Butler County came to McLean County. Some of these families were Nofsingers, Brenneman, Gingerich, Donner, Schoenbeck, Otto, Springer, Kennel and Kinsinger. In 1842 Rev. Michael Kistler, a Hessian Mennonite preacher, came to McLean County. Rev. Kistler had been ordained in 1838 in Butler County by his father-in-law, Rev. Peter Nafsiger. The Hessian Mennonites now began holding services in the homes in their community.

We are perhaps too near to our fore-fathers to fully appreciate what they contributed to the present generation but we should always hold in grateful remembrance those whose courageous and sacrificing lives were responsible for the present blessings we enjoy. It is remarkable when we stop to consider the fact that the brief span of a century embraces the history of the growth and development of the Amish people in Central Illinois and yet in that comparatively short time the vast unbroken prairie has become one of the garden spots of our country. The poet Whittier expressed the idea of these early settlers when he said:

"We cross the prairies as of old
The pilgrims crossed the sea
To make the West as they the East
The homestead of the free.

2. Rev. Reeser died January 12, 1923, at the age of 103.

"We're flowing from our native hills
As our free rivers flow.
The blessing of our motherland
Is on us as we go.

"We go to plant the common schools
On distant prairie swells
And give the Sabbaths of the wild
The music of our bells."[3]

3. These verses from Whittier are taken from the McLean County Atlas of 1879, p. 625. They apply very well to the Amish with the exception of the last line. The Amish did not believe in church bells.

CHAPTER VI.

REV. JONATHAN YODER. (Joder)

By 1850 there were enough Amish in the northwestern part of McLean County to establish a congregation separate from the Mackinaw Church. All that was needed was a leader to organize the group. This leader was found in Rev. Jonathan Yoder of Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, who came to McLean County in the spring of 1851 and settled in Dry Grove Township. Since he was the leader of the church for the next twenty years and also organized the congregation from which came the Central Conference Mennonite Church, it is important to consider the history of his life at some length. Emerson says: "Biography is the only true history." So we may from the biography of Rev. Yoder get considerable history regarding the mother church of the Central Conference Mennonites.

The ancestry of Rev. Jonathan Yoder can be traced back to the year 1720 when his great-grandparents left Switzerland for America. While on the sea the great-grandfather died and the great-grandmother, Barbara Yoder, came to the eastern part of Pennsylvania. She was the mother of eight sons and one daughter. Her son Christian, who had eleven children, was the grandfather of Rev. Yoder. Jonathan's father's name was David Yoder. His mother's name was Jacobina Esh who came from Switzerland while young and arrived in Philadelphia about 1780. David and his wife were the parents of three sons and five daughters, Jonathan being the third child.

Jonathan Yoder was born September 2, 1795, in Berks County, Pennsylvania. When he was sixteen his father moved from Berks County to Mifflin County and bought a large farm. Here Jonathan's mother died about 1817 and his father in 1820. He received most of his training in the home and through his own efforts. He received only a few months' actual schooling in a subscription school in Mifflin County. He was able, however, to read and write both English and German.

He was married in 1816 to Magdalene Wagner. Her parents were Hessian Mennonites and came to America during the Revolutionary War. Her father died at a ripe old age in Berks County, Pennsylvania. Rev. Yoder and his wife had eleven children. Two died while quite young while nine were married and reared families. Rev. Yoder raised his large family with the labor of his hands when wages for ordinary laborers were only fifty cents a day. Yet by industry and the prudent and economical management of his wife, they lived comfortably and became possessors of a small home four miles west of Lewistown in Mifflin County, Pennsylvania. He spent a part of his time at carpenter work and followed the business of framing barns but in the year 1828 he moved to Center County, Pennsylvania, and there bought one hundred acres of land in Half Moon Township, a little south of the village called Stormstown. He lived here eight years and then in 1836 moved to Tuscaroras Township, Juniata County, Pennsylvania. He was ordained as a minister in Berks County in the Amish Church in about 1827. He was later ordained as a bishop. He served the church from his ordination until his death without salary or compensation.[1]

In 1848 his two sons, Elias and Amos, and his brother Joseph came to McLean County, Illinois. Elias settled in Dry Grove Township on what is now known as the Kinsinger farm. His brother Amos came to the same place. In the spring of 1851 Rev. Yoder and the rest of the family came to Dry Grove Township, McLean County. Mr. John Ritter, a friend of Rev. Yoder, who lived in the same county with him in Pennsylvania, came to McLean County, Illinois, for a few years and then moved to Oregon. Mr. Ritter wrote to Rev. Yoder encouraging him to come to Illinois. Partly because of this encouragement and also because several of his children were here, he came to this state. He bought a forty-acre farm not far

1. One of the most important sources of material for the life of Rev. Yoder is a biographical sketch written by his son Joash in 1875 and printed in 1900.

from his son, Elias, and engaged in farming until about 1860 when he and his wife went to live with his son, Amos. Here Mrs. Yoder died February 2, 1866. Rev. Yoder then went to live with his daughter Mrs. John Sharp near Congerville, Illinois, where he died January 28, 1869.

Rev. Jonathan Yoder being a bishop when he came to McLean County, soon became the leader of the Amish people of Danvers and Dry Grove Townships. He also had quite a large following of his own people from Pennsylvania who came here about the same time he did. Soon after his arrival he organized a congregation and they held meetings in the homes of the members. In the spring of 1853 a church house was built at Rock Creek, where are now the Rock Creek Fair Grounds, about five miles north of Danvers. Rev. Yoder was not only a leader in his own congregation, but also a recognized leader in the Amish Conferences in America that were held throughout the United States. He was moderator of the first Amish Conference held in Wayne County, Ohio, in 1862.

He was a man of great physical strength and endurance. He was able to earn a living for a large family and in addition perform the ministerial duties that devolved upon him. He was a man of more than ordinary intelligence, of reason and excellent judgment. He was of a generous and peaceful nature and yet very firm in his convictions. Although he was rather reserved, yet he had a kind and jovial disposition which made him beloved by all who became acquainted with him. He was a typical Amishman from Pennsylvania and was conservative in his views. He believed in the conventional form of Amish dress, bonnets and veils for women, hooks and eyes and long hair for men. Yet he was progressive when compared with the other Amish bishops of his day. He very often showed a liberal attitude toward new things that came up. The story is told that he met with a number of Amish bishops in Central Illinois to discuss the question as to whether young men should be allowed to wear neckties. After the bishops had assembled one of them brought the pipes and tobacco and gave a pipe to

Rev. Yoder. He held it a while and then threw it down and said to the other bishops: "We have met to consider whether the young men can wear neckties and yet we ourselves engage in this filthy habit of smoking." It is said that the meeting adjourned without discussing the question of neckties.

Rev. Yoder, judging by the work he accomplished, was a man of executive ability, an original thinker and had great initiative. He had the marks of leadership. He filled a large place in his day because the Amish of Dry Grove and Danvers Townships were in need of a leader at this time. He fills a large place in the history of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. His death came in rather an unusual way. A ministers' meeting was held at the home of his daughter, Mrs. John Sharp, in the latter part of January, 1869. At the noon hour when Mrs. Sharp invited the ministers to the dining room, Rev. Yoder said he did not care to eat and would rather lie down and rest. The other ministers went to the table and after dinner when they came back into the room they found that he was passing away. He died January 28, 1869, at the age of seventy-four years and was buried in the Lantz Cemetery a few miles southeast of Carlock.

CHAPTER VII.

THE YODER CHURCH. 1860-1872.

The congregation organized by Bishop Jonathan Yoder was called the Yoder Church. It was formed because the Amish were now leaving the timberland along the Mackinaw and the groves and were settling on the open prairies in Danvers, Dry Grove, Allin and White Oak Townships. These people found it very inconvenient because of the distance to worship with the Mackinaw congregation. There was also a nucleus formed for this congregation by the coming of the Pennsylvania families.

THE CHURCH HOUSE

The Yoder congregation was organized in the latter part of 1851. After worshipping in the homes for about two years the congregation decided to build a church house. This frame building was located at the northeast corner of what is now the Rock Creek Fair Grounds. This is the first Amish Church House in the state of Illinois and one of the very first in the United States.[1] The church was located on the farm of Joseph Gerber. Some of the men particularly interested in the building of a church house were the bishop, Rev. Jonathan Yoder; the deacons, Rev. Michael and Rev. Jacob Miller; Joseph Gerber; Joseph Stuckey, John Strubhar and Christian King. Rev. Jacob Miller was one of the solicitors for funds for the church. There was a need for this new edifice because the houses were too small to accommodate the rapidly increasing membership. The church house was a frame building twenty-eight by thirty-six feet and cost five hundred dollars. Material for the church building was hauled from Peoria, a distance of some twenty miles. Niggerheads,"large stones", served as the foundation. One of the members of this church said that through the sum-

1. Smith, The Mennonites of America, p. 231.

mer the pigs in the timber would sometimes seek shelter or shade under the church on Sundays and disturb the meeting. This church building served the congregation until 1872. It housed the first Sunday School held in a church house in the Central Conference Mennonite Church.

THE MINISTERS.

The ministers in the Yoder Church from 1853-1860 were Rev. Jonathan Yoder, bishop; Rev. Michael and Rev. Jacob Miller who had come from Butler County, Ohio, deacons. The Amish Church had three orders in the ministry; those who were the overseers and had full authority were called, "Volligdiener", bishops; those who were ordained for preaching but did not have full authority were the "Diener zum Buch", ministers; and third, those who were to serve the poor "Armendiener", deacons. All of these ministers were selected by the vote of the congregation, the one receiving the highest vote being ordained.

By 1860 the ministers of the early church were getting old and felt that they needed help in the ministry. It was the custom among the Amish to have a number of ministers in the same congregation. A vote was taken of the congregation and Joseph Stuckey and John Strubhar were elected. They were ordained by Bishop Jonathan Yoder on April 8, 1860. On April 26, 1864, Rev. Joseph Stuckey was ordained bishop by Rev. Yoder. In 1867 Christian Imhoff was ordained as a deacon of the church. Rev. Jonathan Yoder now coming to the close of his ministerial career, Rev. Joseph Stuckey became the leader of the church.

THE MEMBERSHIP.

The Yoder Church increased in membership from one hundred to about four hundred in the period 1853-1872. This rapid increase was largely due to two causes outside of a natural growth. In the first place the membership covered a large

area. The community included a territory with a radius of ten miles. To those that are familiar with this territory it might be interesting to say that some members came to church from near Hudson, others from Zook's Crossing, some from close to Eureka, and others from south of Danvers. The reason for the location of the new church building at Rock Creek was to get as near to the center of this territory as possible. The second reason for the rapid increase in membership was due to the coming of new settlers from the eastern part of the United States and from Europe.

THE CHURCH ACTIVITIES.

The church activities of the Yoder Church were few. The important one was the Sunday morning church service. This was usually a very long service and often tedious, particularly to the children and young people. They were sometimes found out in the timber, engaging in recreation rather than in the church house. All the services were in the German language. After the sermon given by one of the ministers the others in turn would bear testimony which often took considerable time. These services were held every two weeks. About the only other church activity was an occasional singing class at the church. There was no foreign misison work, no young people's work, no women's organization, no institutional work, no evening services and no Sunday School.

By 1867, however, there were those in the Yoder Church who felt that a Sunday School should be organized. There was considerable opposition from the older members of the church, and so the first Amish Sunday School was started in the old Strubhar schoolhouse, a few miles from the church in the summer of 1867. The leading men who urged Sunday School were Rev. Joseph Stucky, Rev. John Strubhar, Elias and Iddo Yoder. In the summer of 1869 the Sunday School was held in the Yoder Church on Sunday afternoon. In the summer of 1870 there was a Sunday School started in the Grant schoolhouse in

Dry Grove Township. All the teaching in the Sunday School was in the German language. The adults used their Bibles while the children used German primers from which they learned their A B C's. A few years after the building of the new church in 1872 Sunday School was held in connection with the morning service.

There is another form of church activity that is significant not only as it relates to the Yoder Church but also to the Amish Church of America. Up to 1862 the Amish Churches in America were established as independent congregations without any conference organization or any definite form of cooperation. Each bishop with his congregation, or perhaps few congregations, was independent of the others. The Amish leaders discovered that there were some differences arising among the various Amish Churches, due largely to the fact that they came from different environments. It seemed that the western Amish were somewhat more progressive than the Amish in the East. Differences appeared in customs as well as religious opinions. One of the differences as stated by Dr. Smith was the question of baptism. In Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, there was a division on the question as to whether a person should be baptized in the house, as had been the custom, or whether the applicant should be baptized in an open stream. Other questions were such as these: should the ministers go into the council room (Abrat) before service on Sunday morning; some were putting away the old song books and using others; prayer books were discarded by some; the ban was not enforced in some of the churches; customs in dress were changing; questions as to whether members could use lightning rods, have photographs, build large meeting houses and insure their property. It was for the purpose of harmonizing these differences that a series of conferences were held including all the Amish Churches of United States and Canada.[1] These conferences were held from 1862-1878. Rev. Jonathan Yoder was the moderator of the first conference held in the

1. Smith, The Mennonites of America, p. 238.

spring of 1862 in Wayne County, Ohio. In 1866 the fifth one was held in the large barn of Rev. John Strubhar near Danvers, Illinois. Rev. Jonathan Yoder and Rev. Joseph Stuckey were some of the leading bishops in these conferences. The last one was held at Eureka, Illinois, in 1878. The conferences ended because they were rather a failure as far as the attempt to harmonize their differences was concerned. The Yoder Church participated in these conferences from 1862 to about 1870. Rev. Jonathan Yoder, however, died in 1869 and Rev. Stuckey did not attend after 1872 for reasons which will be taken up later.

THE LIFE OF THE PEOPLE

From 1850 to 1872 there were great economic and educational changes that took place in Central Illinois that had a very marked effect on the church life of the Amish. As stated before the early settlers settled along the groves and timberland and thought that the prairies could not be farmed. With the handicaps of no railroads, no bridges, no good roads, prairie fires, wet marshes and ponds they thought it was an impossibility. But by 1860 many of these handicaps had been removed. Townships were organized in 1858 which meant the building of bridges where needed and the making of better roads. Drainage of the prairie lands was introduced among the Amish about 1850 which soon eliminated the marshes and ponds. Settlers now began to move out on the open prairies. In 1850 the government refused the granting of land to settlers on the prairie in order to give the railroads an opportunity to take land grants. But after 1851 when the opportunity was again given for securing land on the prairies, settlers began to buy it for $1.25 an acre. By 1877 this same prairie land sold for $30 an acre, by 1900 for $150 an acre and during the World War for $400 an acre. Land today (1926) sells for $250 an acre. In the time of one generation prairie land increased in price from $1.25 to $250 an acre. This was largely due to the drainage of the land with tile and the coming of the railroads. This has brought

great prosperity to the Amish. McLean County is the third wealthiest county in the United States. It has a decided effect on their church life. In the first place it is a blessing because it gives the church a large opportunity for service with its money. On the other hand this same blessing may become a curse in the fact that people become self-satisfied and fail to have a vision of the needs of the world.

Another very important development that helped to improve conditions was the railroad. On May 23, 1853, the first train on the Illinois Central and October 16, 1853, the first one on the Chicago and Alton reached Bloomington. The eastern part of Woodford County and the southern part of Livingston County was not settled until the Chicago and Alton, Illinois Central and Toledo, Peoria and Western railroads were built. Towns and farmers elevators began to spring up along these railroads. When the Lake Erie and Western was built from Bloomington to Peoria in 1887, Carlock, Congerville and Goodfield were laid out in 1888. Towns like Slabtown and Farnesville on the Mackinaw and Oak Grove in the East White Oak district died. This meant better markets for the farmers. All this encouraged the settlement of the prairies. The railroads are a very important factor in the history of the expansion of the Amish in Central Illinois.

There were also marked changes in education from 1850-1860. In 1855 the legislature passed a law providing for free schools supported by taxation. For the Amish this meant the public schools and the teaching of the English language. Their children now learned the English language and could not understand the German preaching in the churches. This helped to bring about the transition from the use of the German to the English in the Amish church. It also meant that the Amish children would receive more schooling throughout the year. The term of school soon increased from a few months to five, six or seven months. A little later only a very few of the first Amish young people went to high school and prepared for teaching in the public school. It is this group of young people

who later made demands of the church for Christian Endeavor Societies, English Sunday Schools and more progressive church work.

Economically this is the period of invention which meant improved farming conditions and better production of crops. These economic, intellectual and social changes brought about marked changes in the Amish Churches of Central Illinois which will be noted in a later chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

REV. JOSEPH STUCKEY

As we come to the period 1872-1898 the leadership of the Amish Church has changed from Rev. Jonathan Yoder to Rev. Joseph Stuckey. Rev. Joseph Stuckey, because of his strong personality, became the leader not only of his congregation but also of the Amish Church in Central Illinois. His leadership was so effective that after 1872 his congregation received the name Stuckey church, and the Amish people who were his followers were called Stuckey Amish, while they affectionately called him "Father Stuckey". Because of the work that he accomplished a history will be given of his life.

Rev. Joseph Stuckey's grandparents lived in Bern, Switzerland. Here Peter Stuckey, Rev. Stuckey's father, was born August, 1801. While Peter Stuckey was yet a small child the parents left Switzerland and moved to Alsace. His parents both died while Peter was very young. He then lived with his grandmother until he was twelve years old. From this time on he lived among strangers and was compelled to make his own living. At the age of seventeen he became a member of the Mennonite Church. In 1824 Peter Stuckey married Elizabeth Sommers of Alsace. Her parents had fled to Alsace years before because of persecution. Elizabeth was born in 1802.

Rev. Joseph Stuckey was born in Alsace, July 12, 1825. He was the oldest of a family of eight children. In 1830 his parents came to Butler County, Ohio, by the way of New Orleans. Here Rev. Stuckey grew to manhood. He received a very limited education in one of the old log schoolhouses of Butler County. The length of his school experience was about two months. The rest of his education he received in the school of experience. He became a member of the Amish Church in Butler County at about the age of eighteen. The Amish at this time were still holding their services in the homes of the members.

He was married December 17, 1844, to Miss Barbara Roth. She was born in Alsace, March, 1821. She came to America with her parents in 1842. Rev. Jacob Augspurger, one of the first ministers in the Amish Church in Butler County, performed the marriage ceremony. He had also baptized Rev. Stuckey. Rev. and Mrs. Joseph Stuckey had two children, Jacobina, born February 23, 1846, who was married to J. S. Augspurger of Butler County, Ohio, and died June 8, 1926—; and Mr. C. R. Stuckey, born September 10, 1852, who at present resides in Danvers, Illinois.[1]

In October, 1850, Rev. Joseph Stuckey with his family and parents came to Illinois. They came by the way of the Ohio River and the Illinois to Fort Clark where is now Peoria. He, with his brother-in-law, John Habecker, worked for a few months in a packing house and then in March, 1851, came to Danvers Township in McLean County. Here Rev. Stuckey rented land for farming until 1858 when he bought forty acres a few miles northwest of Danvers. He paid three dollars an acre for the land he bought. Rev. Stuckey added to his land until he had two hundred acres at the time of his retirement in 1868. He engaged in active farming until October, 1868, when he retired and lived with his daughter Mrs. Augspurger who moved on his farm. In 1877 he moved to the town of Danvers where he resided until his death. He was very industrious, careful in his business dealings and had great administrative ability.

Rev. Stuckey's father died February 22, 1860, and his mother in 1885. His wife died April 27, 1881. He was then married to Mrs. Magdalene Habecker, a sister of his first wife. Rev. Stuckey died February 5, 1902. Before his death he selected the text for the funeral sermon, II Timothy 4: 7, 8. Rev. Peter Schantz, Rev. Valentine Strubhar and Rev. John Kohler had charge of the services. He was laid away to rest at the Imhoff Cemetery. His second wife died May 17, 1904.

1. The writer is indebted to Mrs. Augspurger and Mr. C. R. Stuckey for much of the information given in this sketch.

Joseph Stuckey

(Rev. Joseph Stuckey) 1825-1902

The Stuckey family was a charter member of the Yoder Church. Rev. Stuckey was one of the chief promoters in the building of the Yoder Church House in 1853. April 8, 1860, he was called to the ministry and ordained by Bishop Jonathan Yoder. Four years later, on April 26, he was ordained as a bishop by Rev. Jonathan Yoder, assisted by Rev. Christian Ropp and Rev. Jacob Zehr of the Mackinaw Church.[2] He had very little training for his work in the ministry, yet he had a great deal of mental ability. Practically all his training came through personal effort. Mr. C. R. Stuckey, his son, states the situation well when he says, "He was then a young man, just a common farmer with very limited schooling, working hard every day on the farm, trying to establish a home for himself and his family , and lay up something for old age. You can well imagine the disadvantages he was at to serve the church as their pastor and at the same time try to provide a home and some meager comforts for his family. Well do I remember how my father used to pore over his Bible after doing a hard day's work until in the late hours of the night, when perhaps the greater number of his congregation were sound asleep and comfortably resting in their beds, but in the morning he would be up bright and early, ready for another hard day's work."[3] Rev. Stuckey in spite of all these handicaps was very successful in his pulpit efforts. One of the ministers who was then a young man says, "I do not think that I have known anyone of Rev. Stuckey's limited educational opportunities and of his environment who was able to draw so large crowds as he in his pulpit efforts." He was a fluent speaker and a very clear thinker. Very few Amish preachers of his day were able to draw as large crowds as he.

Rev. Stuckey did practically all of his studying and preaching in the German language. There is an interesting incident told as to how he learned his German. As a child he was taught

2. This information is taken from his own records.

3. This quotation is taken from a paper read by Mr. C. R. Stuckey at a reception held for Rev. Wm. B. Weaver in 1922.

the French language. He came to America from Alsace at the age of five. During the time of the ocean trip he played with the children of a number of German Amish passengers and from them he learned the German language. After he came to Illinois he also learned to read the English language. Again there is an interesting incident told by his daughter as to how he learned the English language: He came home from Bloomington one day with the Daily Pantagraph, an English daily paper of Bloomington. When asked by the family what he wanted with it he said he was going to learn to read English![4] And largely through the efforts of reading the Daily he became quite proficient in the English language.

Rev. Stuckey was a very busy man. He was not only pastor of the North Danvers Church but also had the bishop oversight of a number of churches that had been established from the parent church. In his ministry he performed two hundred and fifty-five marriages, thirteen hundred and twenty-eight baptisms and ordained eighteen bishops.[5] He travelled a great deal over the states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska, baptizing converts, ordaining ministers, establishing churches and dedicating church buildings. He kept in touch continually by correspondence and visitation with the Mennonite and Amish leaders in the United States. He was also a writer of considerable ability. He wrote a number of articles for various Mennonite church periodicals. Some of these articles were an account of his travels throughout the United States. He also wrote a number of short poems and articles of a religious nature. Rev. Stuckey was a subscriber of the church papers of a number of the Mennonite groups and also attended conferences in these groups. After retiring from farming he devoted practically all of his time to the work of the church.

Rev. Stuckey was a large well built man physically. This

4. This incident was related by Mrs. J. S. Augspurger, his daughter, now deceased.

5. Taken from his own records.

strength gave him the power of endurance in the midst of his economic and religious duties. He was a success in his farming while at the same time he was also preparing himself for his work in the ministry. One of the men who knew him said, "He was a large man physically but to me he seemed even larger morally, mentally and spirtually."[6] He was an original thinker and had a great deal of general knowledge. He was well versed in the Bible and had a good memory. He was a man of sound judgment. His advice was sought by many people in the different phases of life. People sought his advice in relation to economic matters as well as ministers in relation to their religious work.

Rev. Stuckey was a man of strong personality and therefore a born leader. He lived at the time when after the death of Rev. Jonathan Yoder the church needed leadership. Because of this situation he filled a large place in the church. He was endowed with natural talent as a speaker. This enabled him to mould the religious thinking of the Amish Church of Central Illinois. He was a man of firm conviction and yet very considerate of the views of others. Although judged by the present time as very conservative, in his day he was criticised very severely by the Amish leaders for his liberal attitude. The difficulties which he encountered in the Amish Conferences from 1866-1872 were largely due to his progressive ideas and his sympathetic attitude toward those with whom he might not agree. He was blamed by those who opposed him for lack of stability, a man who could be too easily touched and could not say no even when he knew he should. He was sometimes blamed for splitting churches when as a matter of fact he was only trying to care for those who had left the old church and were without a leader. He was blamed for being unorthodox because he was sympathetic with those who may even have differed with him theologically. The so-called weakness empha-

6. Quoted from a letter received from Rev. J. C. Mehl who knew him personally.

sized by some of those who opposed him proved to be one of his strongest marks of leadership.

In conclusion then it may be said that Rev. Stuckey's outstanding qualities were his natural ability for leadership, his pulpit powers, his positive convictions, his great organizing ability and his sympathetic attitude towards people and towards the problems that the church was facing. Rev. Joseph Stuckey was to the Amish of Central Illinois what Menno Simon was to the peaceful group of Anabaptists. He did not establish a new church but he organized the forces which were then existing and assumed the leadership of a group of people who were without a shepherd.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STUCKEY OR NORTH DANVERS CHURCH. (1872-1898)

There were two changes that occurred as we come to the period 1872-1898. The one has already been discussed, the change of leadership from Rev. Jonathan Yoder to Rev. Joseph Stuckey. The other was the change that took place in the location of the place of worship.

THE NEW CHURCH HOUSE.

It was noted in a former discussion that the Amish people when they came to Central Illinois selected the timber land and the groves in preference to the open prairie but after 1850 when the railroads were built through the country and the drainage system was established the Amish people left the timberland and the groves and established their homes on the open prairie. The people of the Yoder Church moved farther away from the Mackinaw and the groves and established their homes farther east and north. The center of the church community therefore also moved farther east. So in order to have the place of worship more convenient, the church decided to build nearer the center of the community. On the other hand the building at Rock Creek erected in 1853 was getting too small for the rapidly increasing membership. It is said by some of those now living who attended the old church that it was almost impossible for the whole membership to get into the church for Sunday morning service. It was decided by the congregation to erect a frame building three miles northeast of Danvers, and two miles south of the old church. The old church was bought by the Mackinaw Amish people and used for a few years as a house of worship. The new church building was erected in the summer of 1872. It was larger than the old church, being a structure forty by sixty-two feet. With a few changes this

church served the congregation until 1917 when it was remodeled and made a brick-veneered modern church edifice. This is the building now used as the place of worship (1926). After Rev. Stuckey's death and when other Amish Churches were established in the surrounding communities such as Congerville and East White Oak, the church was called North Danvers, being in the northern part of Danvers Township.

MINISTERS.

The Amish Churches at this time, instead of having one pastor, usually had a number of ministers to serve the congregation. This was true of the North Danvers Church. In the year 1872, when the congregation began to worship in the new church the following were the ministers: Bishop Joseph Stuckey, Rev. John Strubhar, Rev. John Stahly, Rev. Christian Imhoff, Rev. Joseph Stalter, Rev. Michael Miller, and Rev. Jacob Miller. These men represented the three orders of the Amish ministry; bishops, ministers and deacons.

Rev. John Strubhar who was a deacon in the church, ordained in 1860, died November 17, 1883. Rev. John Stahly came as a bishop from Switzerland in 1864. He died June 27, 1900. Rev. Christian Imhoff was ordained in 1868 by Rev. Stuckey. He died May, 1881. Rev. Joseph Stalter came from Butler County, Ohio, in the '50's and died in the '90's. Rev. Michael and Rev. Jacob Miller were deacons when the Yoder Church started in 1853. Rev. Michael Miller died August 23, 1873, and Rev. Jacob Miller died Aug. 22, 1893.

Because of the death of some of these ministers and the fact that the others were getting old, Rev. Stuckey in 1882 appealed to the congregation for ministerial help. He believed in calling young men to the ministry which was rather unusual in the Amish Church at that time. The congregation elected two young men, Joash Stutzman and Peter Schantz, who were ordained as ministers by Bishop Stuckey in 1882. Rev. Stutzman's ministerial career was very short. He died September

19, 1891. Rev. Peter Schantz was assistant pastor of the congregation until 1892 when he became pastor of the new congregation organized in the White Oak district. The establishment of this new church and the death of Rev. Stutzman necessitated another ordination. In 1892 the church again elected two young men, Joseph Clark and Joseph King. They were ordained by Bishop Stuckey April 17, 1892. Rev. Clark only served one year when he left for another field. Rev. Joseph King was assistant pastor to Rev. Stuckey until Rev. Stuckey's death in February, 1902. Rev. King then became pastor of the congregation until 1914 when he became pastor of the new church organized at Carlock, Illinois. It was at the beginning of Rev. King's ministry that English preaching was introduced into the church. Rev. John Kohler, ordained April 30, 1899, and serving as pastor with Rev. King after 1902, became the pastor of the church in 1914 and served until about 1920. After several years without a resident pastor the congregation called Rev. William B. Weaver of Goshen, Indiana, who took charge of the church July 1, 1922, and is at present the pastor (1926).

THE CHURCH ACTIVITIES.

A comparison of the church activities of the North Danvers Church with those of the Yoder Church show some marked changes. After October, 1872, the church became more thoroughly organized. Business meetings were now held each New-year's Day where reports were given and the business of the church transacted. Written records of the business meeting were kept after 1880. These records were written in German the first year but after 1881 they were written in English. Different officers were elected for the various duties of the church.

The church in this period also encouraged Sunday School work. As stated before Sunday School was held in the Yoder Church in the afternoon by 1869, but by 1880 the Sunday School was held in connection with the morning church service. Both Sunday School and church were held every Sunday. A report of the North Danvers Church given by Rev. Stuckey to the

General Conference Church Secretary shows that by 1890 the Sunday School had organized a Teachers' Meeting. It also shows that the membership of the church in 1890 was four hundred and twenty-five. The present membership is two hundred and eight. The English language was introduced into the song service and Sunday School about 1887 and into the church service in 1893.

Although the church did not have any organized mission work the record of 1890 showed that ninety dollars was given that year to foreign mission work and ninety dollars to home mission work in another Mennonite group. Another phase of home mission work was the expansion of the mother church and the establishment of new congregations in the surrounding communities and in other counties. This accounts for the decrease in membership of the mother church. Rev. Joseph Stuckey was largely responsible for the leadership and bishop oversight of these new organized congregations in this period.

Another very important activity of the church was the organization of the Christian Endeavor Society in 1892. This was the first Christian Endeavor Society in the Central Conference Mennonite Church. It is significant to note that it was only eleven years after the first Christian Endeavor Society in the United States was organized. Mr. Eli Sharp, a member of the church, was largely responsible for its beginning. He had moved to Minnesota in 1888 and there joined a Christian Endeavor Society. When he came back to the North Danvers Church he introduced Christian Endeavor work among the young people of the church. This encouraged the use of the English language and also marked the beginning of evening services.

CHAPTER X.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CHURCHES. (1860-1908)

Thus far the history of the Amish in Central Illinois has centered about one congregation, the Yoder Church, and after 1872 called the Stuckey Church. From this parent organization there came a number of new congregations which helped to form the Central Conference Mennonite Church. When the conference was organized in 1908, there were twelve charter member congregations. The following history will give a very brief account of the other eleven churches, particularly stating under what conditions, by whom, and when they were established.

THE SOUTH DANVERS MENNONITE.

The first new church to be established was the South Danvers Mennonite. In a former discussion we noted that at the same time that the first Amish came to McLean County, there were also a number of Hessian famlies that came from Butler County, Ohio, and established homes in McLean County. It might be well at this point to remind ourselves of the history given in a former chapter concerning the division that came between Amish and Hessian Mennonites in Butler County. It is to be noted here that these settlers, both Amish and Hessian Mennonites, brought with them to Central Illinois these same differences.

One of the first Hessian families to come to McLean County was Peter Donner, Sr. who settled in Dry Grove Township in 1837. Between 1837 and 1860 a number of Hessian families came, such as the Nafsingers, Donners, Kennels, Brennemans, Ottos, Kinsingers, Springers, and Gingerichs. In 1842 Rev. Michael Kistler of Butler County, Ohio, came to the community of the Hessian Mennonites. Rev. Kistler had been

ordained as a minister by his father-in-law, Rev. Peter Nafsinger, called the "Apostle", of Butler County, Ohio. The Hessian Mennonites now began to have church in their homes with Rev. Kistler as their minister. When the Yoder Church was built in 1853 the Hessians with Rev. Kistler began to worship at the Yoder Church. After worshipping together for several years the congregations discovered that they were very different in their customs and practices. Rev. Kistler and Rev. Yoder could not agree. Bishop Yoder was an Amishman from Pennsylvania and believed in hooks and eyes on clothes and did not believe in musical instruments in the home and was very strict in his discipline of members. Rev. Kistler, of course, being a Hessian, believed in buttons on clothes and was more lenient in his discipline. After considerable disagreement Rev. Yoder set Rev. Kistler back from communion. Rev. Kistler's people supported their leader and so the Hessian congregation again worshipped in their homes after 1859.

Their pastor went back to Butler County and was ordained as bishop and then came back and took charge of the South Danvers Mennonite Congregation. He remained with the church until 1863 when, because of his radical views on baptism he left and joined the Christian Church. Later he went to Missouri where he died. The year before Rev. Kistler left, the congregation elected Christian Gingerich who had come from Butler County, Ohio, in 1855, and Michael Kinsinger who came from Butler County in 1837, to the ministry. They were ordained by Rev. Kistler in 1862. In 1863 Rev. Christian Gingerich was ordained bishop by Bishop John Nofsinger of Walnut in Bureau County, Illinois. He was the leader of the congregation until 1893.

In the spring of 1864 the congregation built the frame church house about two miles south of Danvers. The church was thirty by thirty-six feet and cost two thousand dollars. The membership of the church at this time was about one hundred. The church increased rapidly in membership under the leadership of Christian Gingerich. By 1885 Bishop Gingerich

felt the need of ministerial help and so in the fall the congregation elected John Gingerich, the son of Bishop Gingerich, and John Kinsinger who came from Butler County, Ohio, in December, 1881, as ministers. They were ordained in September, 1885. In 1893 both of these men were ordained as bishops by Rev. Peter Schantz of the North Danvers Church and Bishop Christian Gingerich. Rev. Michael Kinsinger died June 28, 1895 and Bishop Christian Gingerich in 1908. This church was not connected with any conference organization until in 1908 when the Central Conference Mennonite Church was formed.

Rev. John Gingerich and Rev. John Kinsinger, after years of faithful service, retired from the active ministry and are at present living in Danvers, Illinois. Rev. L. B. Haigh, a returned missionary from Africa, served the church for the years 1922-23 and then moved to Havelock, North Carolina. The congregation then called H. E. Nunemaker of Sterling, Illinois, who has been pastor of the church since March, 1924. He is at present (1926) the pastor at Danvers, Illinois.[1] Rev. Nunemaker was ordained as minister and bishop March 29, 1925.

One of the first activities of the South Danvers Mennonite Church, outside of the regular Sunday morning preaching service was the Sunday School. The Sunday School was started in about 1883, the first superintendent being Rev. John Kinsinger. All the teaching was done in the German language. The adults used the Bible as a text book while the children used the German primer. The purpose of this primer was to teach them the German language, since the German was no more taught in the public schools. All of the preaching was German and the church felt it necessary to teach their children the German language. In about 1895 the question came up concerning the introduction of the English language into the Sunday School. The young people presented the matter to the congregation but the congregation voted it down. Some of the older people sug-

1. Rev Nunemaker resigned as pastor Jan. 16, 1927, and accepted a call as pastor of Comins Mennonite Church, Comins, Mich.

gested that a resolution should be passed that the matter dare not be presented for ten years. But it was finally decided that they could not have English for one year. When the end of the year came a few of those that were interested in the English language decided to get the English material for the Sunday School. A class was started with no objections and from that time the English was used with the German in Sunday School. A few years later Rev. John Kinsinger began English preaching in the church. The first material used in Sunday School in the English language was that published by Rev. J. F. Funk of Elkhart, Indiana.

By 1914 quite a few of the older members of the South Danvers Church had retired from farming and moved to Danvers and quite a few of these had no way to attend the services in the country and so there was an agitation for moving the church to town. The congregation decided to disband in the country and hold their services in town. Before this time services had been held on Sunday afternoon at the Baptist church. The congregation later rented the church building of the Evangelical Friedens (Church of Peace) at which place they are now worshipping. The membership of the church is sixty-one.

The second church activity to be introduced was Christian Endeavor work. Mr. J. W. Hilty was largely responsible for introducing this work in the church. He had been a member of the North Danvers Church and had there been active in Christian Endeavor work. He started a Christian Endeavor Society in the church soon after the church came to town.

Another church activity was the Ladies' Aid Society The society was organized April 27, 1911. It has been very active in contributing to the needs of our various institutions.

CALVARY MENNONITE CHURCH.

The next new congregation to be organized was the East Washington Church now called the Calvary Mennonite and located in Washington, Illinois. In a discussion of the early Amish settlements it was stated that a number of Amish from

Alsace Lorraine settled in Woodford County along the Illinois River as early as 1831. From 1840-1860 a large settlement of Amish was formed in Woodford and Tazewell Counties. Among these early settlers were the Sweitzers, Engels, Nofsingers, Birkeys, Unsickers, Rissers, Garbers, Strubhars, Kennels and Stuckeys. There were also a few Amish families who moved from the Yoder Church community to the Washington community, such as Peter Strubhar, and Peter Stuckey, a brother of Rev. Joseph Stuckey. In May, 1866, Rev. Jonathan Yoder visited Peter Stuckey and in their conversation he inquired where Mr. Stuckey was attending church. He replied that they had no church privileges in their community and so did not go very often. Rev. Yoder immediately proposed that he would come over and preach for them if they desired it. The following day Peter Stuckey told the good news to Peter Strubhar and he immediately called on Bishop Yoder and made arrangements for a meeting at the home of Peter Strubhar, one mile east of Washington.

When the time for the first meeting came it was announced that Rev. Yoder could not come because of sickness but Rev. Joseph Stuckey would come in his stead. Rev. Valentine Strubhar, the present senior pastor of the church, says, "The news of this first meeting spread very rapidly and arrangements were made for seats by sawing saplings about two and one-half feet in length for benches to lay boards on. Everything was arranged for the meeting in short order but when everything had been made ready the news came that Elder Yoder was unable to come on account of illness, but arrangements were made for his assistant pastor to take his place. Joseph Stuckey, the assistant pastor, was a young man with plenty of executive ability and a very able speaker who drew a very large crowd for the meeting, as the people came on horse back and wagons, some of them for twenty miles and many of them walked for several miles."[1]

1. Much of this information was received from an address given by Rev. Valentine Strubhar at the dedication of the new church in the summer of 1925.

At the close of this first meeting held in May, 1866, immediate steps were taken to have meetings every four weeks. These meetings were held in the homes of the members. These people continued to worship in the homes from 1866-1869. But the church at once took on such a healthy growth that it was necessary to build a house of worship to accommodate the rapidly increasing membership. This church was erected a few miles east of Washington in the summer of 1869. The building was thirty by forty feet and cost a little over two thousand dollars. The church now felt the need of resident pastors to care for the work. A meeting was called in the latter part of 1869 at the home of Daniel Nofsinger, one and one-quarter miles east of Washington, for the purpose of calling two young men to the ministry. The two young men chosen were Peter E. Stuckey and Peter Gingerich. These two men were ordained by Bishop Joseph Stuckey in November, 1868. About 1880 Rev. Gingerich affiliated himself with the Partridge Mennonite Church. Rev. Peter Stuckey was ordained bishop in 1875 and remained with the congregation until Feb., 1889, when he went to Aurora, Nebraska, to take charge of the congregation there. It now became necessary to call other men to the ministry. The two men chosen in 1889 were Michael Kinsinger, who had come from Germany and D. D. Augspurger. They were ordained by Bishop Stuckey in the fall of 1889. In December, 1892, Rev. Augspurger left for Aurora, Nebraska, to assist in the work there and Rev. Michael Kinsinger became the pastor of the church.

After Rev. Augspurger left for Nebraska, Rev. Kinsinger felt the need of help and the congregation elected Valentine Strubhar and Christian Imhoff. Rev. Imhoff died about 1900. They were ordained January 10, 1893. Rev. Strubhar is at present the senior pastor of the church (1926). About this same time, 1892, a difficulty arose in the church in relation to English preaching. Some of the younger people of the church wanted English introduced while Rev. Michael Kinsinger, having come directly from Germany, was opposed to it. In the summer of

1894, after a number of attempts to heal over the schism, a division came and Rev. Kinsinger, with a group of people sympathetic with him, organized what is now known as the South Washington Church. Rev. Strubhar now became pastor of the church.

Because of increased activities in the Central Conference Mennonite Church which brought more and greater responsibilities to the pastor, he presented to the annual business meeting in January, 1907, the matter of having an assistant in his ministry. The time did not seem ripe for this matter so it was dropped until in January, 1911, when the church almost unanimously supported the proposition. Rev. Ben Esch was then called by the congregation as assistant pastor and was ordained in December, 1911. Rev. Esch is at present assistant pastor of the church (1926).

The church erected a new frame building as a place of worship in the fall of 1906 and dedicated the building in January, 1907. This building served the church until 1925 when a modern brick edifice was erected in the town of Washington. The church now changed its name from the East Washington Church to the Calvary Mennonite Church. The church has a membership of three hundred and eight. It has the usual activities of Sunday School, Christian Endeavor, Ladies' Aid and missionary work. The church held a Christian Workers Institute in January, 1926.

FLANAGAN MENNONITE CHURCH.

Soon after 1850, after the building of the Illinois Central, and Chicago and Alton railroads a number of Amish people of Woodford County settled in the southwestern part of Livingston County. In about 1876 these people started a Sunday School north of Gridley, Illinois. In 1878 Christian Rediger was ordained as a minister for this group of people. He soon after organized a congregation which was called the Flanagan Mennonite Church. In 1882 a church building was erected by this

group of people. Rev. Christian Rediger left for Aurora, Nebraska, in 1885, and Stephen Stahley was ordained to take his place. Rev. Stahley came from Switzerland in 1864. He was ordained to the ministry in 1885. He was later ordained as bishop by Rev. Joseph Stuckey and served the congregation until his death February 26, 1916. October 19, 1890, Joseph Zehr was ordained as assistant pastor. He was later ordained as bishop by Rev. Stuckey. He is at present (1926) the bishop of the church and one of the oldest ministers in the conference. He is assisted in the ministry by Rev. Emanuel Ulrich who was ordained May 26, 1918. The membership of the church is about ninety.

MEADOWS MENNONITE CHURCH.

The next of the charter member congregations to be organized was the one at Meadows, Illinois. By 1874 there were a number of Amish people living around Meadows who had come from Alsace Lorraine and France, such as the Sommers, the Roches, the Verclers and the Claudons. In 1874 some of the members from the Flanagan Church assisted these Amish from Meadows in starting a Sunday School in the Meadows school house. Soon after the Sunday School was started preaching services were also held. Ministers of the churches, Flanagan, Washington and North Danvers conducted the preaching services.

In the winter of 1890 this group of people organized a congregation and in the spring of 1891 they built a church house north of Meadows. The church was dedicated by Rev. Joseph Stuckey in June, 1891. In August of the same year the congregation chose Joseph Kinsinger, who had come from Germany, and Andrew Vercler, as candidates for the ministry. They were ordained by Bishop Joseph Stuckey August 30, 1891. They were ordained as bishops October 23, 1897. After about ten years of growth the congregation became so large that they needed a new church building; so they erected a building in the town of Meadows in 1900.

Rev. Kinsinger and Rev. Vercler served as pastors of the church until January 1, 1925, when they retired and Rev. George Gundy who had been pastor of the Congerville Church, became the pastor of the Meadows congregation. Rev. Gundy is also superintendent of the Old Peoples' Home at Meadows, Illinois. Rev. Joseph Kinsinger died May 8, 1925. Rev. Vercler is treasurer of the Home Mission Board and is one of the oldest ministers in the Conference. The membership of the church is two hundred and ten. This church had one of the first Ladies' Aid Societies in the Conference.

EAST WHITE OAK MENNONITE CHURCH.

As was noted in a former discussion, in 1872 the location of the Stuckey congregation was changed from Rockcreek to a place a few miles south and east of the former location. This was done in order to make it more convenient for the Amish families who had left the groves and timberlands and were living on the open prairie to attend church. But by 1890 the large membership of the North Danvers Church was scattered over a large area. A number of the members lived about ten miles east of the church in the White Oak district. These people with wagons and buggies would drive from ten to fifteen miles every Sunday morning to attend the church services.

The members living in that territory started a Sunday School in the summer of 1892 and then sixty charter members got together and organized a church in their community. They started building a church house in the fall of 1892. They received encouragement from Rev. Peter Schantz who was interested in extension work and felt the need of other churches being established in neighoring communities. He had moved into the White Oak district in late fall of 1892. A congregation was organized in 1892 with Rev. Peter Schantz as pastor. It was called the East White Oak Church. The new church house was dedicated in February, 1893.

Soon after the dedication, Christian Endeavor and evening meetings were begun. In 1899 because of the growing con-

gregation Rev. Schantz felt the need of help in the ministry. The congregation chose Emanuel Troyer who was ordained by Rev. Schantz in 1899 and became the assistant pastor of the church. August 15, 1910, Rev. Peter Schantz moved to Normal where he had started a Mission Sunday School which later developed in the Normal Mennonite Church. Rev. Emanuel Troyer then became pastor of the church and was ordained as bishop in 1911. Rev. Troyer is at present (1926) serving as pastor of the church and bishop while at the same time serving as Field Secretary for the conference. By 1921 Rev. Troyer felt the same need that had been felt by Rev. Schantz of help in the ministry. So in January, 1921, the congregation elected Earl Salzman who became the assistant pastor of the church. Rev. Salzman is at present in training for the ministry in Witmarsum Seminary. The membership of the church is three hundred and sixteen.

ANCHOR MENNONITE CHURCH.

Another expansion of the North Danvers congregation was the establishment of a church in Anchor Township, McLean County, in the eastern part of the county. The first Amish settlers came to this community in about the year 1880. Most of them came from Danvers Township and were members of the North Danvers Church. They went there believing there were good opportunities in agriculture because the country at that time was practically new. Some of the first families were: David Werners, Sr., William Leisters, Hiram Troyers, Peter Schertzes, Sr. Rev. Augspurger, the pastor, says: "There were still other families but since the country was practically new and much of the land wet and undrained which proved a disappointment to some, there was always more or less a floating population. However, the families named were more optimistic and persevering and thus gained the victory."[1]

1. This quotation as well as most of the material for the history of this congregation has been taken from a history written by the pastor, Rev. Aaron Augspurger.

In 1884 these first families organized a Sunday School at the Rockford schoolhouse, five miles south of the town of Anchor, of about fifty members. The Sunday School was conducted altogether in the German language. Soon after the organization of the Sunday School, Rev. Joseph Stuckey made frequent visits and held preaching services. Later arrangements were made to have preaching one Sunday a month. Later the center of population had moved eastward and the place of meeting was moved to Fairview schoolhouse, two miles farther east. This change took place in 1890. At this time the German language was dispensed with except for the older members and the Sunday School was conducted in the English language.

By 1890 there were about fourteen families who took active interest in Sunday School. In 1894 the members requested Rev. Stuckey to organize a church. The request was granted, a church organized and Aaron Augspurger, a grandson of Rev. Stuckey was elected as pastor June 10, 1894. Through the encouragement of Rev. Augspurger the members decided to build a place of worship and the church was erected in 1910. The building is a frame structure thirty by forty with two class rooms. The church was dedicated December 15, 1910, by Rev. Valentine Strubhar of Washington, Illinois, and Rev. Andrew Vercler of Meadows. Rev. Augspurger was ordained as bishop by Rev. Peter Schantz of East White Oak and Rev. J. B. Zehr of Flanagan in 1900.

The pastor says that the church and Sunday School were one body from the beginning and have always remained so. Christian Endeavor and evening service were held for several years after the church was built, but had to be abandoned, on account of many members living at too great a distance to attend evening service. In closing the history of this church the writer wishes to quote the pastor when he says: "The future of the church is not assured in point of growth for several reasons: first, because of its itinerating membership, second, its location in a strong Lutheran community and third, the lack of

compactness of citizenship. Therefore its largest work will probably always be as stated above, the taking care of and homing of what might be called the floating population." Rev. Augspurger is at present serving as bishop and pastor of the church. Rev. Augspurger is one of the oldest ministers of the Conference and has been one of its effective leaders. He was largely responsible for the origin of the Conference and has also contributed much as a member on the various boards of the church. His brief sketches of the history of the Conference and its activities in the Christian Evangel has meant much in the writing of this history.

ZION MENNONITE CHURCH (GOODLAND, INDIANA).

The next church to be established was the Zion Mennonite near Goodland, Indiana. This was one of the first congregations of this Conference to be established outside of Illinois. Rev. D. D. Augspurger, who was ordained at the East Washington Church and then later moved to Aurora, Nebraska, came in 1895 to the vicinity of Goodland, Indiana. He says he was the first Amish preacher in Newton County, Indiana. In April, 1895, he organized a Sunday School three miles south of his home. He being a minister, preaching services were also held. The Sunday School and preaching services were held in this schoolhouse for three years. A church house was erected in 1898.

Rev. Augspurger served the church as pastor until 1908 when he ordained his son-in-law, Jacob Sommer. Rev. Sommer served as pastor from 1908-1910. In the fall conference of 1910 Rev. Sommer and wife volunteered for city mission work and later became workers at the Mennonite Gospel Mission in Chicago. This necessitated the calling of another pastor. In 1910 the congregation elected Peter D. Nafsinger who was ordained in the same year by Rev. Lee Lantz. Rev. Nafsinger is serving at the present time as pastor of the church. Some of the early settlers in this community were the Nafsingers,

Sommers and Augspurgers. The present membership of the church is seventy-three.

CONGERVILLE MENNONITE CHURCH.

The Congerville Mennonite congregation was the first church of the Amish to be established in a small village. Congerville is one of the villages that came into existence as a result of the building of railroads. Before 1860 such towns as Oak Grove in the White Oak district and Slabtown and Farnisville along the Mackinaw were quite prominent but when the Lake Erie and Western was built from Bloomington to Peoria such towns as Carlock, Congerville and Goodfield arose along the railroad while the former towns passed out of existence. A number of the members of the North Danvers congregation were living in the community of Congerville. A Sunday School was organized by these members under the leadership of Rev. Peter Schantz in 1891.

Largely through the efforts of Rev. Peter Schantz in January, 1896, a congregation was organized. For three years the pulpit was supplied by various ministers. Lee Lantz was elected as pastor of the church in the spring of 1899. Rev. Lantz was pastor of the congregation until 1908 when he left for Nampa, Idaho. George Gundy was then ordained by Rev. Peter Schantz to serve as pastor of the church. He was pastor until January 1, 1925, when he became pastor of the Meadows congregation. Reuben Zehr of Flanagan was then called by the church and installed as pastor Sept. 6, 1925. He was ordained to the ministry on December 5, 1926. The membership of the church at present is one hundred.

PLEASANT VIEW MENNONITE CHURCH, AURORA, NEBR.

Another one of the charter congregations that was established was the one in the far West. It was the first one in the Conference to be established outside of the state. This church was organized by Rev. Christian Rediger. He was ordained

near Flanagan in 1878, and preached in a schoolhouse north of Gridley for nearly three years, and then was instrumental in organizing the Flanagan Church. He was ordained bishop by Rev. Joseph Stuckey in 1885. This same year he moved to Aurora, Nebraska.

When he came there he found three Amish families from Central Illinois. With these he organized the Pleasant View Church near Aurora, Nebraska. In November, 1887, Rev. Andrew Oesch, who had been ordained by Rev. Joseph Birkey at Tiskilwa, Illinois, came to Aurora, Nebraska, and was a minister in this church. In the spring of 1893 Rev. D. D. Augspurger, who had been ordained at Washington, Illinois, also came to Aurora. Rev. Augspurger only stayed two years and then moved to Goodland, Indiana. Rev. Oesch left Aurora and moved to Normal, Illinois, November 1, 1912. In 1910 Bishop Peter Schantz of the East White Oak Church went to Aurora and conducted a week's religious services. At these services two young men, George Donner and Julius Oesch, volunteered for Christian work. The congregation immediately asked for their services at that place. They were ordained by Rev. Schantz to serve as assistant pastors. Rev. Julius Oesch soon left and came to Normal, Illinois, and is now preaching in another denomination. Rev. Donner served the church until 1921 when he united with the United Brethren Church. This again left Rev. Christian Rediger as the only pastor. At the close of 1922 he, because of old age, retired from the ministry and the congregation called Rev. Eugene Augspurger of Normal, Illinois, who began his pastorate June 16, 1923. Rev. Rediger is at present living as a retired minister in Aurora and Rev. Augspurger is serving the church as pastor. The present membership of the church is one hundred and twenty-five.

TOPEKA MENNONITE CHURCH, TOPEKA, INDIANA.

The Topeka Mennonite Church, located at Topeka, Indiana, is an outgrowth of the Silver Street Mennonite Church near Goshen. The Silver Street Church at first belonged to the

General Conference of Mennonites and so does not come into our history until later. A number of families who belonged to Silver Street lived near Topeka and had a long distance to church, so in 1893 they asked Rev. J. C. Mehl, pastor of the Silver Street Church, to provide services for them at Topeka. Rev. Mehl preached for them every four weeks. In 1897 they bought a church house of the Methodists and Rev. Mehl preached for them every two weeks. He served the congregation for several years but finding the thirteen mile drive and the care of the two congregations too burdensome, he ordained John C. Lehman in December, 1901, to serve the Topeka congregation. Rev. Lehman moved to Topeka in November, 1902, organized the congregation and also established the Sunday School work. In the spring of 1918 during evangelistic services conducted by Rev. Emanuel Troyer the congregation elected Ernest Hostetler to assist Rev. Lehman. He was ordained by Rev. Lehman June 9, 1918. The senior pastor has now retired and Rev. Hostetler is the acting pastor. The membership of the congregation is ninety-nine.

BETHEL MENNONITE CHURCH.

This last of the twelve charter congregations was established through extension work of the East Washington Church. Some of the members of the East Washington Church lived in this community while there were other Amish who were rather dissatisfied with the old church. These people called for Rev. D. D. Augspurger to provide preaching services for them. He began holding services for them in about 1890 in what was called the Railroad schoolhouse, four miles east of Pekin. A Sunday School was also organized at this place. The Sunday School was at first a union project but later became a branch of the East Washington Sunday School. After Rev. D. D. Augspurger left, the pulpit was supplied by ministers from the surrounding Amish congregations, especially Rev. Joseph Stuckey of North Danvers and Rev. Peter Schantz of East White Oak.

On the first Sunday in August, 1905, Allen Miller was chosen as minister of the congregation which had been organized a short time before. The congregation worshipped in the Railroad schoolhouse until 1910 when a new church edifice was erected three miles east of Pekin. It was dedicated September 11, 1910, and was called the Bethel Mennonite. Rev. Allen Miller, the President of the Conference, is at present the pastor of the church. The activities of the congregation, such as Christian Endeavor and Ladies' Aid, began soon after the congregation worshipped in the new church. The membership of the congregation at present is seventy-five. A number of the members of this congregation moved to Michigan and later organized as the Washington Centre congregation.

CHAPTER XI

THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE MENNONITE CHURCH

A number of references have been made in this history to the Central Conference Mennonite Church as an organization. The history of the church divides itself into two periods, the first dealing with the origin of the Amish and the history of the individual congregations which formed the organization. As noted before there were twelve congregations which formed the Central Conference Mennonite Church. The second part of the history deals with the organized conference, its activities and a history of the individual congregations which made application to be received into the Conference. The question that naturally arises at this point is, what is the origin of the Conference, and how did it receive its name? The name Central, Conference, and Mennonite need an interpretation. As stated before the name Mennonite has been given to this group although a large majority of the membership is Amish.

When the first church originated in 1853 the church was Amish and was affiliated with the Amish Conference of the United States and Canada. After 1872 when the church left the Conference and was under the leadership of Rev. Joseph Stuckey, people were called the Stuckey Amish, a name which is still given to our group by some people. The name Amish was dropped when the Conference was organized in 1908. The name Mennonite was deliberately chosen by this group in keeping with the tendency among the Amish people. In fact there are only a few of the most conservative among the Amish that retain the name.

In this history the term Amish has been used generally up to this time, the time of organization of the Conference when the name Mennonite was officially taken. The Conference called itself the Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites. The significance of the term Central Illinois grows out of the fact that the first congregations originated, were established in the

counties of McLean, Woodford, Tazewell and Livingston. The Conference was called Central Illinois until 1914 when the name Illinois was dropped because quite a large number of the congregations added to the Conference were outside of the state of Illinois. The term Conference signifies an organization. The twenty-nine congregations included in this group are in one organized body called the Central Conference Mennonite Church.

In order to trace the history of the origin of the Conference as an organization it will be necessary to go back again to the history of the first church of this group of people. It will also be necessary to study the history of the Amish Conferences in America from 1862-1878. In 1853 Rev. Jonathan Yoder, an Amish bishop from Pennsylvania, came to McLean County and organized the Amish of Danvers Township and surrounding townships into a church. This church, as noted before, was located at the Rock Creek Fair Grounds. The Yoder Church, as well as all other Amish Churches in America, was independent of any conference affiliations from 1852-1862.

In 1862, because of differences that had arisen among the Amish of America in customs and religious opinions, they organized a conference for the harmonizing of these differences. This conference met each year in various parts of the country, the meetings being called "Dienerversammlungen." Rev. Jonathan Yoder was one of the leading bishops when the first conferences were held, and Rev. Joseph Stuckey, after his ordination in 1864 as bishop also became quite prominent. Rev. Jonathan Yoder was the moderator of the first conference held in 1862 in Wayne County, Ohio. One of these conferences was held in 1866 in Rev. John Strubhar's large barn near Danvers, Illinois.

By about 1870 it was discovered by the Amish bishops that the differences were not being harmonized. There was considerable difference between the congregations of the East and those of Indiana and Illinois, particularly in relation to customs in dress and various religious practices. The Amish

Church of the West in which this difference was marked was the one under the leadership of Rev. Joseph Stuckey. The Amish men of the East still wore hooks and eyes on their coats and vests and did not "shingle" their hair nor did they wear neckties. In some of the western congregations, especially in the Stuckey Church, men began to wear buttons, shingle their hair and the younger men began to wear neckties. These were some general causes for the separation of Rev. Stuckey's congregation from the Amish conference. The real crisis came, however, through a situation that arose in Rev. Stuckey's congregation.

Joseph Yoder, a brother of Rev. Jonathan Yoder, had come from Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, and settled in Danvers Township in 1848. He was a member of the Stuckey congregation. Mr. Yoder was eccentric in his ways and very liberal in his religious views. He was somewhat of a genius for his day. Although having had very little schooling, he mastered Greek and Latin after he was forty and also began the study of Hebrew. He was a Bible student but his interpretation of the Scriptures did not always correspond with that of the interpretation of the church. He was a poet and began to express his religious views in various poems he wrote. One of them which caused a great deal of disturbance was "Die frohe Botschaft" in which he upheld the idea of universal salvation. Mr. Yoder reached this conclusion largely through his interpretation of the love of God. A great deal of emphasis in his day was placed on the wrath of God and the eternal punishment of sinners. This was often over-emphasized by the church which naturally minimized the love of God.

From a study of Mr. Yoder's religious poems, particularly "Die frohe Botschaft", it must be concluded that he was trying to break away from the extreme position on the wrath of God and in his emphasis on the love of God swung to the other extreme that all shall be saved. He undoubtedly was very much misunderstood by those who interpreted his poetry. This particular poem mentioned above found its way into the

hands of some of the Amish bishops. At one of the conferences Mr. Yoder had someone to distribute some of his poems at the meeting. The Amish bishops denounced his one poem bitterly. It became one of the chief discussions in the Amish conferences from 1870-1872.

Bishop Stuckey being the pastor of the writer of the poem was asked to expel him from the congregation. Mr. Yoder otherwise was a member in good standing in the church. Rev. Stuckey had a number of heated discussions with him but was not able to change Mr. Yoder's views. He even set Mr. Yoder back from communion but did not expel him. Rev. Stuckey was blamed by the eastern bishops of agreeing with his parishioner in his views on universal salvation. This was, however, a sad mistake. The pastor being of a charitable disposition did not wish to expel him from the congregation although he did not agree with him in his views.

The final issue came in the Amish conference of 1872, held in Lagrange County, Indiana. In the written report of this conference given by the secretary and published later, it is stated that Rev. Stuckey refused to have his name listed with the rest of the ministers and the addresses that he gave at the conference were not printed. The Amish bishops of the East now refused to cooperate with him any longer. A committee composed entirely of eastern bishops was appointed to consult with Bishop Stuckey and try to adjust the matter. They, after investigation, declared they could not consider Rev. Stuckey in harmony with the Amish Church and could not cooperate with him. The Amish congregations of Central Illinois, with the exception of the Mackinaw Church stood by their leader and so from 1872 these churches were not in the Amish conference. There never was any formal division but from the above date Rev. Stuckey did not attend the Amish Conference. This, it might be mentioned incidentally, was the same year the North Danvers Church was built. Rev. Jonathan Yoder died in 1869 and Rev. Stuckey was the leader of the Amish. This accounts very largely for the name Stuckey Amish. In

conclusion it should again be said that the incident related above was not the only cause for separation but also the fact that Rev. Stuckey's people were more progressive than the people of the East.

From 1872-1898 when new Amish Conferences were formed, the churches under Rev. Stuckey's leadership remained separate from all conference affiliations. Rev. Stuckey, however, was in close touch through these years with the General Conference of Mennonites and other Mennonite groups but his congregation never united with any of them. A report of the North Danvers Church is found in an 1890 report of the General Conference Churches of North America. His note books also revealed the fact that through travel and correspondence and subscribing for the church papers he was in continual touch with Mennonite leaders of other conferences. Rev. Stuckey in this peoriod also took a great deal of interest in congregations which had similar experiences as his. He has been even blamed for causing divisions in churches. This does not seem to be the case but it can truthfully be said that he was always willing to assist through his effective leadership where a group of people were without conference affiliation or the proper leadership to make progress. His records show that he travelled both east and west in visiting congregations and groups of people, who needed help, encouraging the work, ordaining bishops and ministers and helping congregations to succeed.

From 1872 to 1898 Father Stuckey kept in close touch with the various Mennonite Conferences and was well informed about them. Due to his experiences, however, with the Amish Conference he could never be persuaded to unite with any of the other conferences. In September of 1898 the Middle District Conference of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America held their yearly meeting in the community of the Stuckey Amish at the Rock Creek Fair Grounds. The conference was entertained by the North Danvers Church. Even

this conference held in Rev. Stuckey's own community did not convince him of the advisability of joining a conference.

From the years 1883 to 1898 quite a large number of young men had been ordained to the ministry by Rev. Stuckey, serving as pastors in the various congregations of the Stuckey Amish. These ministers felt the need of help and instruction in the doctrines of the church and in methods of congregational work and also felt very keenly the need of closer cooperation as ministers. Rev. Aaron Augspurger, the grandson of Father Stuckey, spoke with him a number of times as to the need of ministers having a meeting. Father Stuckey was not very enthusiastic about the idea and hesitated considerably. With his experience in the Amish Conference he did not like to risk another one. Largely, however, through the persuasion of Rev. Augspurger he finally gave his consent. Rev. Augspurger says: "Rev. Stuckey's opposition to a conference was due not so much to benefit of united action as it was to wrangling over non-essentials."[1] Rev. Augspurger wrote the letters calling the first ministerial meeting with the approval of Father Stuckey. It was held August, 5, 1899, at the home of Rev. Stuckey's assistant pastor, Rev. J. H. King, a few miles southeast of Carlock. Practically all of the ministers of the congregations then established were present at the meetings. Rev. Stuckey was president of the meeting. This meeting was so helpful that it was unanimously decided to have another one. The second meeting was held September 26, 1899, at the North Danvers Church. Ministers and a few laymen were present at this meeting. Rev. Peter Schantz was elected chairman of the meeting. After these meetings Rev. Stuckey said: "The child is born, name and nourish it but be careful how." His farewell message to the ministers before his death in 1902 was: "Much hard work lieth before you."

The conferences from 1898-1907 were largely in the nature of Bible study and a discussion of the doctrines of the church.

1. This quotation is taken from a brief history of the Origin of the Conference by Rev. Augspurger in the Year Book of 1923.

The meetings were inspirational and not legislative. After 1900 the Sunday School conference met with the church conference. But through the beginning of certain activities in the group it was found necessary to be more closely organized. The one particular activity which called for closer organization was the mission work of the church. Then on the other hand new congregations were being established and the work was expanding rapidly.

In the conference of 1907 held in the East Washington Church it was decided to organize permanently and a committee was appointed to draft a constitution. The constitutional committee met December 10, 1907, at the North Danvers Church and drafted the constitution. It was then distributed to the congregations whose history has been given. These were to send their written acceptance to Rev. Aaron Augspurger, who was secretary, before the fall conference of 1908. The twelve congregations thus became the charter members of the conference. The first conference under the new organization was held September 10, 1908, at the North Danvers Church. The name Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites was given to this new organization until in 1914 when the name was changed to Central Conference Mennonite Church. There are now twenty-nine congregations in the conference with a membership of three thousand.

CHAPTER XII.

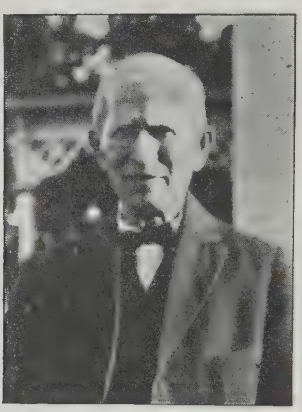
REV. PETER SCHANTZ

The history of the Central Conference Mennonite Church has now been given to 1908 and the conference is established. The leadership of the church has now changed from Rev. Joseph Stuckey, who died in February, 1902, to Rev. Peter Schantz. Since Rev. Schantz was the outstanding leader, both in the establishment of new churches and also in the mission work of the church, it is fitting that his biography should be given in detail.

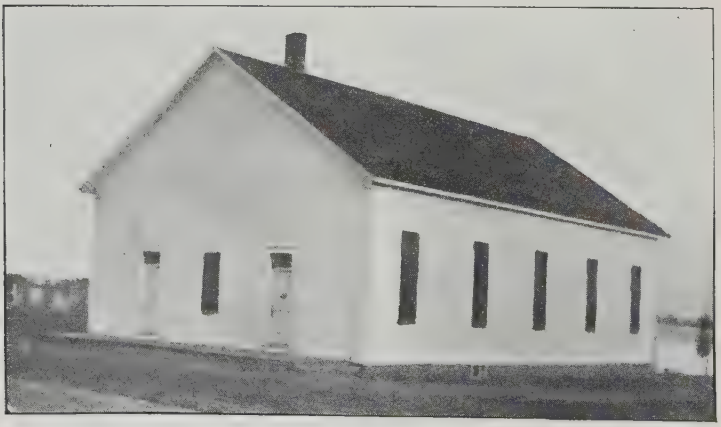
The outstanding leader of the Central Conference Mennonite Church for a quarter of a century (1896-1921) was Rev. Peter Schantz. He was born near Congerville, Illinois, in Woodford County, April 14, 1853. His parents, Jacob and Catherine Deiss Schantz came from Hesse Darmstadt, Germany, to America on their wedding trip. Jacob Schantz was born about 1822 and Catherine Deiss 1824. They came to America in about the year 1847 and settled on a farm near Congerville. They lived in an old log cabin with two rooms until December, 1863, when they built a new house.

In April, 1864, Rev. Schantz's father died and in September, 1866, his mother, leaving him an orphan at the age of twelve. He was now thrown upon his own resources to make his way in life. He was the second child in the family and so did not receive help from older brothers and sisters. The oldest in the family was his sister, Barbara, who later married Rev. Stephen Stahley. His school advantages were very meager, getting only a few months of schooling each year. After the death of his mother he was taken into the home of Rev. Christian Imhoff who cared for him until he was twenty. In 1872, at the age of nineteen, he was baptized by Rev. Joseph Stuckey and became a member of the North Danvers Church. This was the first year of the newly organized church at North Danvers.

December 23, 1875, he married Anna Kinsinger, a daughter



REV. PETER SCHANTZ
1853-1925



MOTHER CHURCH
(North Danvers Church. Built in 1872.)

of Rev. Michael Kinsinger. After his marriage he moved on the farm of his father-in-law and lived there until 1877 when he bought the farm. In the winter of 1892 he moved to the White Oak district. Here he lived on a farm until August 15, 1910, when he moved to Normal, Illinois. He died in Normal at the home of his son, July 24, 1925.

In 1882 Peter Schantz was called to the ministry in the North Danvers Church and was ordained by Bishop Joseph Stuckey. Up to this time the North Danvers Church had quite a few older men as ministers such as Rev. John Strubhar, Rev. Joseph Stuckey, Rev. John Stahley, Rev. Christian Imhoff, Rev. Joseph Stalter, Rev. Michael Miller and Rev. Jacob Miller. By 1882 the following had died: Rev. Michael Miller, and Rev. Christian Imhoff. The rest of the ministers were getting very old, so Rev. Stuckey felt he needed younger men in the ministry. He appealed to the congregation and they elected two young men, Joash Stutzman and Peter Schantz.

It is rather significant that for the first time younger men were called to the ministry. Rev. Schantz was only twenty-nine years old. Rev. Joash Stutzman died in 1891 and by this time most of the older ministers had died, so Rev. Schantz became Rev. Stuckey's assistant pastor. As a minister he soon manifested his ability of leadership and as Father Stuckey was getting old he naturally became the leader of the church. In the early years of his ministry he spent a great deal of time in evangelistic work and with very good results. In 1900 he was ordained as a bishop and thus had to deal more with the official matters of the church. In the later years of his ministry he devoted a great part of his time to extension work. He had been field secretary of the mission board for seven or eight years until 1916 when he was elected field secretary of the conference with the understanding that he devote practically all of his time to extension work. He held this office until 1921.

Being a man of broad vision and a born organizer he was continually seeking new places for the establishing of churches. In 1891 he was instrumental in starting a Sunday School at

Congerville. In 1892 he decided to go West because he felt there were enough ministers at the North Danvers Church and he was anxious to enter new fields. Just at this time about sixty members of the mother church living in the White Oak district organized a church and urged Rev. Schantz to become their pastor. He moved to the White Oak district in the winter of 1892. In April of 1899 he ordained Emanuel Troyer as minister to assist him at East White Oak. In 1896 he organized a congregation at Congerville and in 1899 ordained Lee Lantz as minister and pastor of the church. Later when Rev. Lantz left for Nampa, Idaho, Rev. Schantz ordained George Gundy to take his place.

Next the Hessian Mennonites of the South Danvers Church living around Hopedale asked for help and so he with the assistance of Rev. John Gingerich organized a congregation at Hopedale, Illinois, September 15, 1901 and ordained John Litwiller as pastor. In 1905 he ordained Allen H. Miller as pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church. He saw an opening in Normal, Illinois, for mission work so he started a Sunday School July 24, 1910, and on March 27, 1912, organized the congregation. He then asked the congregation to extend a call to Rev. Lee Lantz of Nampa, Idaho, who came in 1912. In 1916, Aaron Egli, who had moved to Kouts, Indiana, asked Rev. Schantz to start a church there. So after a series of meeting from October 28th to November 6, 1916, a congregation was organized there and later Rev. Aaron Egli was ordained as pastor. Rev. Schantz also aided Bishop Stuckey in the establishment of churches at Anchor, Meadows, Aurora and Silver Street Church, Goshen, Indiana.

He was not only interested in the establishment of rural churches but was one of the first men in the church to encourage mission work in the city. He was one of the leaders in the foreign mission work and served on the foreign mission committee from it's beginning until his death. He became chairman of the Home Mission Committee when it was organized in 1908. He had much to do with the establishing of the Men-

nonite Gospel Mission in Chicago and the mission in Peoria. After his retirement in 1921 he remained an honorary member of the Foreign and Home Mission Committees until his death.

In the 1920 conference at Flanagan, Illinois, when the time came to elect a field secretary, Rev. Schantz was again nominated for the position. He then rose and said he must decline the nomination because of age and ill-health and advised the appointment of an active, younger man for the responsible position. Rev. Aaron Augspurger, who writes in the January, 1921, Evangel an appreciation of Rev. Schantz's work says: "The delegates fully appreciated the situation. Rev. Schantz has always shown himself a man of unassuming, modest and humble disposition which displayed itself very feelingly at this time, the delegates immediatly acting upon his wishes and advice. The delegates then showed their appreciation of Rev. Schantz's long years of active service by voting to him a stipulated sum from the conference treasury. While Rev. Schantz appreciated this recognition and gift yet there is no money or other material valuation which can properly express the value of Rev. Schantz's service to the conference and we regret to lose him from active duty."

In conclusion then it may be said that Rev. Schantz was a man with a broad vision and a born organizer. He was a man of decision and persistence. His advice was sought by many in business matters as well as religion and in church work. Because of his progressive ideas and methods of work he had considerable opposition from time to time from the church. When he established the first congregations from the mother church it was difficult for the mother church to see the advisability of such a step. Again when he decided at the East White Oak Church in 1910 to leave there and move to Normal a number were not able to see with him the open field. Soon after the advisibility of it was seen when he pursued his field more actively than it was possible for him to do before. He was an indefatigable worker and made large sacrifices for the church

In closing this sketch it is fitting to quote from two of our

present church leaders who knew Rev. Schantz perhaps better than any others. The one is from Rev. Aaron Augspurger whose article in the church paper has been referred to above. In closing his discussion of Rev. Schantz's work he says: "Now that he is retiring there is probably not another man in the entire Conference who has so committed himself and all that he has to the service of the Kingdom of our Lord and to the Conference; has literally worn himself out in the work for the good of lost humanity; an indefatigable worker from the first to last who never gave up when others despaired until he saw the victory. Where is the man or woman who has the gift of vocabulary to express in terms of value and appreciation the work and worth of our dear Brother Schantz to the Conference? Who knows of the sacrifices he has made, the secret of which lies buried in his own bosom, and only known to him and his Lord. Who knows the vicissitudes of life and family cares, aside from his arduous spiritual cares which he has borne, and yet never a word of complaint, and always ready to go forward. Well might we all envy him in Christian heroism and emulate him in Christian service.

Another man who knew him intimately was his assistant pastor at East White Oak, Rev. Emanuel Troyer, who perhaps knew him better than any other minister in the Conference. At the death of Rev. Schantz in 1925 Rev. Troyer wrote a brief history of his life from which the following is quoted: "Brother Schantz was a man whose advice was sought in religious and business matters, a man with a broad vision for the Mennonite Church and a born organizer.* * * * *While Brother Schantz was a man of decision and persistency in that which he knew was right, he was also a kind hearted, generous, sympathetic friend. He never turned a deaf ear to anyone who came to him in trouble. He always tried to look at a situation from the view point of the other person. His every act was for the cause he loved so well. No one will ever know how much good he did for others. His life was lived for others and his delight was to call upon sin-

ners to repent and accept Christ and hundreds of them did so in response to his earnest plea. The consciousness of being able to relieve someone who was suffering or of performing a kind deed was the only reward he craved. I deem it a distinct honor to have been his close personal friend. I never had a friend who was easier to love, safer to trust or worthier to honor. His association was a benediction, his life an inspiration and his memory a heritage. His trust was unwavering and the service which he rendered to God and his fellow-men was spontaneous and complete. His Christ-like qualities shine like the sun at noonday and his memory will remain a perpetual benediction throughout coming generations."

As we close the biographies of these three great church leaders Rev. Jonathan Yoder, Rev. Joseph Stuckey and Rev. Peter Schantz, the reader is reminded of the words of Carlyle when he says, "History is the essence of innumerable biographies;" and also Emerson, "There is properly no history, only biography." So in the lives of these three men it has not only been biography but the history of the church from 1853-1925.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CHURCHES (1908-13).

A history has been given in a former chapter of the twelve charter member congregations that formed the Central Conference Mennonite Church. When these churches were established, each congregation was practically independent and there was no organized form of cooperation between the churches. The people in that period were usually called the Stuckey Amish, Rev. Joseph Stuckey being the outstanding leader. As we come to this second group of churches the situation has changed. Father Stuckey is dead. The twelve churches formed a conference in 1907-1908. So the following churches as they were established needed to make application to the Conference to be received and were then accepted by the organization at their annual meeting. The rest of the history will deal with the establishment of the remaining seventeen churches and also a history of the various activities of the Conference.

BOYNTON MENNONITE CHURCH

The first church to come into the Conference during this period was the Boynton Mennonite near Hopedale, Illinois. This church is an outgrowth of the South Danvers Hessian Mennonite Church. A number of familes of this congregation, such as the Nafsingers, Unzickers, Sutters, Brennemans and Jutzis lived in the community surrounding Hopedale and had some twenty miles to the South Danvers Church.

Rev. Peter Schantz was at Wayland, Iowa, engaged in evangelistic work. Here he met Mrs. Wittrig who had several married children living in the Hopedale community. When she bid Rev. Schantz goodbye she urged him very strongly to do something for the Hopedale people. About this same time in 1899 Abert Brenneman, living in this community, wrote to Rev. John Gingerich of the South Danvers Church asking for ser-

vices in their community. Rev. Gingerich referred the matter to Rev. Peter Schantz, then pastor of the East White Oak Church. In the summer of 1900 Rev. Schantz and Rev. Gingerich held the first church service in the Brenneman schoolhouse in Boynton Township, Tazewell County. Arrangements were then made to hold services every two weeks.

In the spring of 1901 a Sunday School was organized under the leadership of Albert Brenneman. On September 15, 1901, the members decided to form a new church organization and also build a new church house. The building was erected in the summer of 1902 and dedicated December 14th of the same year. In 1908 John Litwiler was ordained as minister and pastor of the church, by Rev. Peter Schantz. This congregation came into the Conference in 1910.

The activities of this church are preaching service and Sunday School in the morning and Christian Endeavor in the evening service. The Christian Endeavor Society was organized June 2, 1912, through the efforts of Elizabeth Streid, the field secretary of the Christian Endeavor, who had been there the Sunday before. A Ladies' Aid was organized April 25, 1912. There was also some extension work done under the leadership of Aaron Egli who was a member of the congregation. He started a Sunday School in the Oak Grove schoolhouse three miles west of Hopedale. Through these efforts a number accepted Christ and became interested in Christian work. September 1, 1911, Mr. Egli organized a Teachers Training Class at the schoolhouse. A two years' course was given in nine months with very creditable results. There were three conversions as a result of the course. February, 1913, Rev. Lee Lantz held meetings in the schoolhouse with good success. Mr. Egli later left and went to Kouts, Indiana. Rev. John Litwiler was pastor of the church from the beginning until 1925. In the summer of 1925 Rev. Frank Mitchell, who received his training at Witmarsum Seminary, supplied the pulpit. On October 1, 1925, the congregation gave him a call to the pastorate which he accepted. Rev. Mitchell is at present the pastor of the

church (1926), while Rev. Litwiler is a retired minister of the congregation. The membership of the church at present is eighty-two.

SOUTH NAMPA MENNONITE, NAMPA, IDAHO.

The South Nampa congregation was organized by a group of Mennonite people representing three different conferences. There were those from the Central Conference of Mennonites who had moved from Illinois to Idaho several years before. Then there were those who had left the old Mennonite Church at Nampa, Idaho, and also a few from the General Conference of Mennonites. Not having a minister the members met in the spring of 1907 and organized a Sunday School. They had Scripture exposition and prayer service following the Sunday School session.

In 1908, Rev. Lee Lantz, who had been pastor of the Congerville Mennonite Church, came to Nampa, Idaho, and became the pastor of the church. He was ordained as minister by Rev. Peter Schantz in the spring of 1899 and as bishop in 1907. The congregation organized a Ladies' Aid Society in February, 1910. A Christian Endeavor Society was organized in 1910. Rev. Lantz remained pastor of the church until 1911. The congregation then called Rev. Menno Niswander who had been pastor of the Silver Street congregation at Goshen, Indiana. Rev. Niswander arrived in Nampa, Idaho, March 31, 1911. On Sunday, April 2nd, Rev Lee Lantz preached his farewell sermon in the morning and Rev. Niswander preached his first sermon in the evening. Rev. Lantz left for Normal, Illinois, where he had been called by Rev. Peter Schantz and the congregation to accept the pastorate. Rev. Niswander served the church as pastor one year. The church was then without a pastor for six years when Rev. Lee Lantz again returned to Nampa in June, 1918. He is at present the pastor of the church. The congregation was accepted by the Conference in 1910. The membership of the church is sixty-one.

FIRST MENNONITE, NORMAL, ILLINOIS

One of the significant movements in the Mennonite Church has been the migration from the country to the villages, towns and cities. This has also been true in the Central Conference Mennonite Church. An attempt on the part of the church to provide places of worship for those who as retired farmers moved to town or who went to town to find occupation accounts for the establishing of some of the congregations. The first city church to be established in the Conference was the First Mennonite at Normal, Illinois. A number of families from the East White Oak congregation and also neighboring Mennonite congregations had moved to Normal and Bloomington. Rev. Schantz saw the need of providing a place of worship for these people if they were to remain members of the Mennonite Church. He was also interested in reaching the non-churched families of Normal. He decided to establish a Sunday School in Normal and also to locate there as a minister. His plan had been to open a Sunday School May 1, 1910, but they were not able to find a suitable building to hold the services. The Sunday School was opened July 24, 1910, and the services were held in the upper room of a store building. The first Sunday there were twenty-five in attendance, seven of whom were children. The week following the first Sunday, house to house visitation was done, giving people an invitation to attend the services. The next Sunday there were fifty present, twenty of whom were children. The average attendance for the Sunday School for the first year was fifty.

Rev. Schantz moved to Normal Aug. 15, 1910, and preaching services were held in connection with the Sunday School. The place of meeting was soon changed from the second story room over the store on the northwest corner of Main and Hovey Avenue to a schoolhouse on West Hovey Avenue. After a year's Sunday School and preaching services the members from the surrounding congregations who lived in Normal and Bloomington expressed a desire for an organized congregation in Nor-

mal. They also urged the building of a church. A committee was appointed to select a location and they selected the corner of University Avenue and Church Street. The building was dedicated on July 2, 1911. Rev. J. H. King had charge of the dedication services

Rev. Schantz took charge of the work but it was to be considered as a mission church of the East White Oak congregation. It continued as a mission church until March 27, 1912, when a church was fully organized with thirty-five members. The first communion service was held May 5, 1912. At this service Rev. Schantz asked the congregation to extend a call to Rev. Lee Lantz of Nampa, Idaho, as pastor. He accepted the call and began his work about the middle of the year 1912. The church in the same year organized a Sunday School April 14th, a Ladies' Aid Society and also Christian Endeavor. Rev. Lantz remained pastor of the church until June, 1918, when he again returned to Nampa, Idaho. The congregation was accepted in the Conference in 1912. In July, 1918, Lee Hartzlers, who were at the Mennonite Gospel Mission at Chicago, came to Normal and Mr. Hartzler became pastor of the Normal Church. He was there only a short time and then resigned because of his health. The congregation then extended a call to Rev. A. S. Bechtel who was installed as pastor April 13, 1919. Rev. Bechtel served the church one year and then left for Pulaski, Iowa. He preached his farewell sermon October 10, 1920. Rev. Schantz again took charge of the work until May 1, 1921, when Rev. W. H. Grubb of Schwenksville, Pennsylvania, began his pastorate. Rev. Grubb was installed May 15, 1921. He is serving at present as the pastor of the church (1926). The membership of the church is eighty-seven.

SILVER STREET MENNONITE, GOSHEN, INDIANA

In 1840-1841 the first Amish came from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, to Elkhart and Lagrange Counties, Indiana. One of the congregations organized in these settlements was the

Clinton Frame congregation, east of Goshen. In 1892 there was a division in this church largely because of the dress question, and about fifty of the members organized a new congregation. For a number of years there had been considerable disagreement between the ministers of the Clinton Church on these same questions and the lay members naturally took sides. The principal cause of the separation was that some fifty members of the church were banned from communion because they refused to accede to certain restrictions concerning dress, especially women, and of shaving among men. It had been decided by the preachers and deacons that a member who opposed these ordinances had no right to commune.

The final crisis came in 1892 when on the evening of June 22nd, about fifty dissatisfied members met in the church to discuss the situation. This is the only meeting they were allowed to have in the church, so the fifty dissatisfied members went to the old Union Chapel, located a short distance from the church, where meetings were continued. Rev. Ben Schrock, a retired preacher and former bishop of the Clinton Frame church, cast his lot with the dissatisfied members. Bishop Joseph Stuckey and Rev. Peter Schantz were invited by these members to come and aid them.. One of the members said: "The members of the Silver Street Church will ever owe a debt of gratitude to Rev. Stuckey and Rev. Schantz that these brethren sacrificed their own work and the comforts of home to assist the new church in every way possible in giving counsel and advice in the dark hours of trial." Members of the congregation had written to Rev. Stuckey asking him to come but he at first refused because he did not wish to cause a division. A committee of five members were then sent from the dissatisfied group to Illinois to interview Father Stuckey. Finally he decided to go to Indiana but requested that Rev. Peter Schantz accompany him. Meetings were conducted from June 22nd to June 28th in 1892 when twenty-two new members were added to the church, eleven by baptism and eleven by confession and letter. On Sunday, June 28th, communion services were held and the

whole membership, seventy-two in number, participated.

The new church was also organized at this time and plans were made for the erection of a new church building. The trustees were instrutced to purchase a suitable tract of land and secured the ground where the Silver Street Church now stands. The church was built in the summer of 1892 at a cost of two thousand four hundred sixty-eight dollars and forty-eight cents. One thousand dollars of this money was received from the Clinton frame church for the financial interests the members of the new congregation had in the old. The church building was dedicated free of debt on October 20, 1892. Evangelistic meetings were continued after the dedication, continuing until October 30th when seventeen more persons were received into the church, now making a total membership of eighty-seven. During these meetings on October 27th the church elected J. C. Mehl as their pastor. Rev. Stuckey and Rev. Schantz had charge of the dedication services and also the ordination of J. C. Mehl.

It is of interest to state here that the brethren Stuckey and Schantz especially stressed the fact to these members that their success in ministering to the needs of the community depended much upon their attitude towards the old church. They emphasized the fact that the members should always be forgiving, kind, gentle and patient, manifesting a truly Christian spirit. The Silver Street congregation felt the need of closer relationship with other church bodies and so they united with the Middle District of the General Conference of Mennonites of North America. They united at the time the conference was held at the Fairgrounds, north of Danvers, Illinois, in 1898. Rev. Mehl explained that the Central Illinois Conference was not as yet organized and their church was located about the center of the territory of the Middle District of the General Conference. Rev. J. C. Mehl served the church from October 27, 1892, to February 25, 1906. He then asked for a year's leave of absence because of his health. The congregation then extended a call to Menno A. Niswander who was a student

at Bluffton College. He accepted the call, was ordained by Rev. J. B. Baer, pastor of the Ebenezer Mennonite Church near Bluffton, Ohio, on February 18, 1906. He began his pastorate at Silver Street February 2, 1906, and served the church until March, 1911. He then accepted a call to the Nampa, Idaho, Church.

Rev. Alvin K. Ropp became pastor of the Silver Street Church, taking up the work in May, 1911. In the spring of 1913 the church was organized in Goshen and Rev. Ropp became pastor of the Goshen Church. Rev. Ropp accepted the pastorate of the Silver Street Church with the understanding that the church transfer her membership to the Central Conference of Mennonites. In 1911 this congregation was accepted as a member of the Conference. Rev. Ropp's accepting of the pastorate of the newly organized congregation at Goshen necessitated the calling of a pastor for the Silver Street Church. A business meeting was held at the church on the evening of April 11, 1913. At this meeting the church elected Allen Yoder to become their pastor. Rev. Allen Yoder was ordained to the ministry and also as bishop by Rev. Valentine Strubhar, April 20, 1913. Rev. Allen Yoder is at present the pastor of the church (1926). The church organized a Christian Endeavor Society in 1912. The church had held the Bible Readings before the time of the organization of the Christian Endeavor. A Ladies' Aid was also organized by the women of the church. The present membership of the church is two hundred and five.

TISKILWA MENNONITE, TISKILWA, ILLINOIS.

By the year of 1910 there were a number of Mennonite people living in Tiskilwa, Illinois. These people requested services to be held for them in town. Rev. Peter Schantz was instrumental in starting work at this place and arranging for services. Rev. Lee Lantz and Rev. J. H. King held union meetings in the Methodist Church in Tiskilwa, November, 1910. Again from November 10th to November 26, 1911. Rev. J. H.

King and Rev. Valentine Strubhar held meetings in the town hall. During these meetings, November 23, 1911, a church was organized. The services were held regularly in the town hall. In May, 1912, the congregation called Eugene Augspurger of Meadows, Illinois, to become their pastor. He was ordained by Rev. J. H. King in June, 1912. He began his pastorate at Tiskilwa June 12, 1912 and continued until September, 1920. During this time the church organized the Ladies' Aid Society March 3, 1913, and also a Christian Endeavor Society in January, 1913.

Beginning with 1913 the congregation urged the erection of a new church building. The church was built of concrete block with a felt roof. The basement of the church was arranged for Sunday School work. The building was dedicated May 15, 1913. The dedicatory services were conducted by Rev. J. H. King. The congregation was accepted in the Conference in 1912. Rev. Augspurger left Tiskilwa in September of 1920, having accepted a call to the Eighth Street Church, Goshen, Indiana. From 1920-25 the church was without a resident pastor. On September 20, 1925, Ernest Bohn of Topeka, Indiana, was installed as pastor of the church. He was ordained to the ministry August 15, 1926, by Bishop Allen Miller of Pekin, Illinois. Rev. Emanuel Troyer had charge of the installation service. Rev. Bohn is serving at present (1926) as the pastor of the Church. The present membership of the church is sixty-one.

SOUTH WASHINGTON CHURCH, WASHINGTON, ILL.

The establishment of the South Washington Church comes as a result of the problem of introducing the English language into the churches. Most of the early settlers that came to Central Illinois, came from German speaking communities and most of them were German by birth. At first they had the privilege of establishing their own German private schools and teaching their children German language, but after 1850 with the

tax supporting English schools the private German schools went out of existence. The children of the German Amish received all of their training in the public schools in the English language. The only German they were privileged to get was what they learned in the homes from their parents or received in the Sunday Schools. It has been noted already that the Sunday Schools in the congregation from the time of their establishment to about 1896 were German. The A B C German primer was used for the children and the German Bibles for the adults. It was the children who had been taught in the public schools in the English language that urged in the churches that English Sunday School and English preaching should be introduced. It was a legitimate request because these young people were not able to understand German teaching or preaching.

There was considerable difficulty in a number of congregations largely because of ministers who had come directly from Germany. One of the most serious difficulties was the one in the East Washington Church. In 1889 Michael Kinsinger, who had come from Germany, was ordained to the ministry in the East Washington Church. By 1892 some of the younger people of the church wanted English introduced into the church service. Rev. Michael Kinsinger was very much opposed to it. Various attempts were made by leaders of the church to persuade Rev. Kinsinger to allow English. Bishop Stuckey's records show that on April 28, 1894, and again on June 24, 1894, he with Rev. Schantz went to Washington to try to settle the difficulty. Soon after Rev. Stuckey's visits the division came and Rev. Kinsinger and Rev. Christian Imhoff, with a group of people sympathetic with them, organized what is now known as the South Washington Church.

This congregation remained independent of the Conference until 1912. By 1911 Rev. Michael Kinsinger was becoming quite old and realized keenly the need of help. He appealed through Rev. Joseph Kinsinger of Meadows, Illinois, for help from the Conference. Three ministers were sent to assist the South

Washington Church, Rev. Joe. Kinsinger, Rev. John Kinsinger, and Rev. J. H. King. Meetings were conducted by these brethren from February 11 to 18, 1912, to prepare the church for the work that needed to be done. Two things were accomplished. In the first place a minister was ordained in the congregation and in the second place the church came into the Conference. The congregation elected John Kennel as their pastor and he was ordained February 18, 1912. Rev. Kinsinger was not able to attend these meetings because of his feeble condition. The resolutions that were made by the church were read to him at his home and he consented to put the church in complete charge of the brethren. Rev. Michael Kinsinger died April 10, 1912. The church organized a Ladies' Aid May 2 1912. The congregation asked for admission into the Conference in 1912 and was accepted. Rev. J. J. Kennel is at present (1926) the pastor of the church. The present membership is one hundred and two.

EIGHTH STREET MENNONITE CHURCH, GOSHEN, INDIANA.

By 1913 there were a number of families of the Silver Street Church living in Goshen, Indiana. In December, 1911, Rev. A. K. Ropp, pastor of the Silver Street Church, moved to Goshen. In the beginning of 1913 the members living in Goshen were considering the advisibility of starting a new church. On the evening of February 28, 1913, tweny persons met at the home of Rev. A. K. Ropp to discuss the situation. It was decided at this meeting to establish a new congregation. A dwelling house was purchased, located at 616 S. Fifth Street which was remodeled so that it could be used for a church. This building was dedicated on April 20, 1913. Rev. Valentine Strubhar conducted the dedication services. Rev. A. K. Ropp became the pastor of the church. The congregation began with fifteen charter members. By November of the same year the membership had increased to thirty. The church had a rapid

growth. By 1915 there were fifty-five members and by 1918 seventy-three members.

The various activities of the church were established such as Sunday School with the beginning of the church; Christian Endeavor was organized in April, 1914; a Ladies' Aid was also organized. Rev. Ropp served the congregation until the spring of 1917. In July of the same year Rev. L. E. Blauch of Ohio was called. He was ordained December 2, 1917, by Rev. John Lehman. Rev. Blauch asked for a leave of absence, leaving in February, 1919. Because of the rapid growth of the church by 1919 the congregation in May, 1919, decided to build. In the same year and month Rev. W. W. Miller of Chicago accepted a call to the pastorate of the church. The new church building was erected on Eighth Street. It was dedicated May 2, 1920, Rev. E. A. Troyer having charge of the dedicatory services, assisted by Rev. Allen Miller, Rev. L. E. Blauch and Rev. J. F. Funk of Elkhart, a pioneer Mennonite minister. Rev. Miller resigned August 15, 1920, and Rev. Eugene Augspurger of Tiskilwa, Illinois, began his pastorate September 5, 1920. Rev. Augspurger served the church until October, 1921, when he left to move to Normal, Illinois. Rev. William B. Weaver then preached for the congregation until June, 1922. In January, 1923, Rev. I. R. Detweiler became pastor of the congregation and is at present serving the church as pastor (1926). This congregation came into the Conference in 1913. The congregation has had another rapid growth from 1924 to 1926. This was due to the efficient leadership of Rev. Detweiler and also to the fact that quite a large number of the Goshen College congregation affiliated themselves with this church. The present membership of the church is two hundred.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CHURCHES (1914-26).

CARLOCK MENNONITE CHURCH

The North Danvers Mennonite Church has been the parent of quite a few of the congregations in the Conference. The history of some of these has already been given, such as East White Oak, Congerville, and Anchor. Another one came as a result of a number of Mennonite people moving to town. Carlock, the same as Congerville, was established when the Lake Erie and Western was built through that territory. Quite a large number of families belonging to the North Danvers Church lived in Carlock and its vicinity. In 1911 Rev. J. H. King, one of the pastors of the North Danvers Church, moved to Carlock.

One of the first steps in the establishment of the Carlock Mennonite Church was the organization of a Ladies' Aid by the Mennonite women of the North Danvers Church living in and around Carlock. This society was organized as a branch of the North Danvers Ladies' Aid in April, 1912. In the spring of 1913 a prayer meeting circle was organized by the Mennonite families in Carlock. Rev. King was the leader of this prayer circle. The third step came when in June, 1913, some of the members of the Ladies' Aid with some of the resident members of the United Presbyterian Church organized a Christian Endeavor Society. The meetings of this society were held in the old Presbyterian Church each Sunday evening. After the Christian Endeavor session Rev. King conducted preaching services. There were about twenty-three Mennonite families living in Carlock and some of these had no way of attending the church in the country. They appreciated the opportunity of attending services in town. The Presbyterian building was sold the latter part of 1913 and so it necessitated the changing of the place of meeting. The town hall

was rented for a year and on January 4, 1914, a Sunday School was organized, conducted by the Mennonites and United Presbyterians. Eighty-four were present at the first Sunday School session. The second Sunday in January there were one hundred and two present. Rev. Troyer held evangelistic meetings at this place from January 22, to February 8, 1914.

In this same month the first steps were taken toward the organization of the church. The church membership book was opened February 18th and all those who wished to unite with this new organization were given time to sign their names until Easter, April 12, 1914. On April 14th, Easter Day, special services were held in the town hall. William B. Weaver of Goshen, Indiana, spoke in the morning and evening service. The church was organized on the same day with a membership of one hundred and three. The church became a member of the Conference in 1914.

The first movement toward the new church building came on Thanksgiving Day, 1914. An all-day service was held in the hall on that day and in the afternoon the necessity of a church building was given careful consideration. In January, 1915, the first definite steps were taken when a special meeting was called, and at the meeting committees appointed and pledges made. The building was begun the latter part of May, the corner stone laid June 12, 1915, by the pastor, J. H. King. Rev. Emanuel Troyer gave an inspiring address on this occasion. The new church building was dedicated Sunday, January 2, 1916. Rev. J. A. Huffman, at that time of Bluffton, Ohio, gave the main address of the day. Rev. Emanuel Troyer had charge of the dedicatory services.

Rev. J. H. King agreed to remain pastor of the church until they would be able to get someone else. August 31, 1919, Rev. W. S. Shelly of Chicago preached at Carlock and in November 16th to 30th held evangelistic meetings. The congregation extended a call to Rev. W. S. Shelly and he began his pastorate June 6, 1920. Rev. Shelly is at present (1926) the pastor of the church. This church has

had the privilege of entertaining a number of important conferences. In 1914 the Central Mennonite Conference; in 1915 the Christian Endeavor Rally; in 1916 the All-Mennonite Convention; in 1924 the first Christian Workers Institute; also Interdenominational Peace Conferences on Armistice Day for the last five years, and in August, 1926, the Peace Conference held under the auspices of the Friends, Church of the Brethren, Schwenkfelders and Mennonites. The present membership of the church is one hundred and twenty-six

KOUTS MENNONITE CHURCH, KOUTS, INDIANA.

The next congregation to be established was the one in the vicinity of Kouts, Indiana, Porter County. Two groups of Mennonites were found in this community; a few families from the Old Conference of Mennonites and then the families of the Central Conference. The young man particularly responsible for the organizing of the church there was Aaron Egli. He was raised in the Hopedale community and had there been very active in extension work. He had organized a mission Sunday School at the Oak Grove schoolhouse near Hopedale. Through the efforts of Mr. Egli a Teachers Training Class was organized there and also evangelistic services by Rev. Lee Lantz. Through these activities quite a large number accepted Christ and also quite a few were trained for Christian service.

In the spring of 1916 Mr. Egli and his father, Christian Egli, bought land near Kouts, Indiana, and moved there very early in the spring. In April, 1916, a Sunday School was organized with John Reinhart and Aaron Egli as superintendents. These Sunday School sessions were held in a schoolhouse. Later Mr. Reinhardt resigned and Mr. Egli had charge of the services. In the conference of 1916 held at East Washington Mr. Egli made an appeal for the establishing of a church in their community. Besides the Sunday School activity, prayer meetings were also held in the homes every week. In November, 1916, the field secretary, Rev. Schantz, visited the settlement and held services

in the school house from October 28th to November 6th. As a result of these meetings two were baptized and several weeks later one received by letter, two by confession. This now made a nucleus of nine members for a congregation. Rev. Schantz frequently visited the congregation and gave assistance. A church was organized in 1918. This congregation made application to be received into the Conference August 25, 1918, and was accepted at the annual meeting held at the North Danvers Church August 27-29, 1918. On March 30,1919, Mr. Aaron Egli was ordained as minister by Rev. Joseph Zehr at the home of Mr. Egli's father near Kouts, Indiana. The Kouts congregation has been very active in various conference activities and although few in numbers have been very good supporters of missions and institutional activities of the church. A Ladies' Aid Society was organized in the congregation November, 1920. Christian Endeavor organization was established 1925. Rev. Egli was ordained as a bishop May 23, 1926, by Rev. Emanuel Troyer at the home of his father Christian Egli, Kouts, Indiana. Rev. Egli is at present (1926) the pastor of the church. The present membership of the church is twenty-four. Services at present are held in the town of Kouts which is a better centre for church activity.

BELLEVIEW MENNONITE CHURCH, COLUMBUS, KANSAS.

The next congregation to come into the Conference is located in the extreme southeast corner of Kansas in Cherokee County, and is called the Belleview Mennonite congregation. This congregation was a result of extension work being begun by the Mennonite congregation at Newton, Kansas. There were a few families of Nofsingers living in the community near Columbus, Kansas, and Rev. Samuel Mishler who lived about fifteen miles south held regular services there. John, William and August Nofsinger with their families came to Kansas from Central Illinois. Rev. Samuel Mishler had ori-

ginally come from Pennsylvania but had come to Kansas in 1880 from Central Illinois. He was responsible for the establishment of the Belleview Mennonite Church. One of the members says that he would drive up in a wagon from his home on Saturday evenings and stay over Sunday. He held services twice a month. In about 1888 Rev. Samuel Mishler ordained John Nofsinger, a member of the congregation and one of the original settlers, as pastor of the church. Rev. Mishler returned to Central Illinois in March, 1896, and died April 10, 1896. Rev Nofsinger was pastor until his death September 19, 1918. Since this time the congregation has been without a pastor. This church remained without any conference affiliations until 1920 when they petitioned the Conference for admission. At the conference held at Flanagan, Illinois, August 31st-September 2d, they were received into the Conference. The membership of the church is twenty-four. This is one of the congregations of the Conference that needs a pastor.

WASHINGTON CENTER MENNONITE CHURCH

Another congregation to come into the Conference in the last few years has been the one established in Gratiot County, Michigan. In February, 1921, a few families from the Pekin Mennonite Church, near Pekin, Illinois, moved into the vicinity of Pompeii and Ashley. For a few years these people worshipped with the Old Mennonite congregation in the community. This church is an extension of the Pekin Mennonite Church and some of the families established there are relatives of Rev. Allen Miller, President of the Conference. In the summer of 1924 Rev. Allen Miller and Rev. Emanuel Troyer spent seven days in meetings there June 15-22 and June 22d organized a Sunday School. In August, 1924, they organized a church with twenty-two charter members. At the 1924 conference held at Congerville, Illinois, Rev. Allen Miller presented a petition for this congregation and they were admitted as a member of the Conference Septmber 3, 1924. This congregation has no resi-

dent pastor at present. In 1925 they purchased a church building of the Evangelical Church. The present membership is thirty. This is another one of the congregations that is in need of a pastor.

COMINS MENNONITE CHURCH, COMINS, MICHIGAN.

The next congregation to come into the Conference in 1926 is the one established at Comins, Michigan. A number of Mennonite families living in the vicinity of Comins had been worshipping with the Methodists for a number of years. Mr. F. F. Stutesman, formerly of the Old Mennonite congregation, started Sunday School in Comins after the Methodist Sunday School had died out. Mr. Stutesman started his Sunday School as a Union school. In 1924 Mr. Stutesman came to Middlebury, Indiana, to interview Rev. Emanuel Troyer, the field secretary, to see what could be done for them. Rev. Troyer then went to Comins and held revival services in the fall of 1924. Rev. Allen Yoder and Rev. Emanuel Troyer then went to Comins in summer of 1925 and organized a congregation. The congregation asked for admission into the Conference. The application for membership was read by the secretary at the conference held at the Silver Street Mennonite Church, August 29th to September 1, 1925. The application was accepted and they became a member of the Conference. A new church building was erected in 1925 and was dedicated November 1st. Rev. Allen Miller, Rev. Emanuel Troyer and Rev. Allen Yoder had charge of the dedicatory services. The present membership of the church is twenty-six. From Nov. 30—Dec. 6, 1926, Rev. Emanuel Troyer assisted by Rev. H. E. Nunemaker conducted evangelistic meetings at the church. The church extended a call to Rev. Nunemaker to serve as pastor. He accepted the call and began his pastorate February 15, 1927.

INDEPENDENT MENNONITE CONGREGATIONS

The last two congregations that came into the Central Conference Mennonite Church were the Warren Street Men-

nonite Church, Middlebury, Indiana, and the Barker Street Mennonite Church, Mottville, Michigan. These had formerly belonged to the Old Mennonite Church but had been independent congregations a few years before coming into the Conference. The Warren Street Mennonite congregation had been a member of the Indiana-Michigan District Conference of the Old Mennonites while the Barker Street congregation was under the general supervision of the Indiana-Michigan Home Mission Board of the Conference. Since the reasons for these congregations, with others, leaving the Old Mennonites are similar, a brief statement of the situation will be given.

These are not very different from the ones that caused the separation between Father Stuckey and his people and the Amish Church in 1872. In fact history has repeated itself a number of times in the Mennonite Church as it related to factions and divisions due to customs and practices of the church. For a number of years the conviction grew upon a number of ministers and laity in some of the congregations of Indiana and Ohio that the emphasis placed by the Old Conference on customs and various regulations to support these customs particularly concerning dress were a hindrance to the progress of the work of the church as well as without Scriptural basis. The crisis came in Northern Indiana in the conference held in the summer of 1923, when a resolution was passed providing for the excommunication of women wearing hats, and further that ministers who failed to carry out the provisions of the resolution should be silenced. There were a number of ministers who could not conscientiously carry out the resolution and were thus dismissed from the ministry. In both of the congregations there were quite a large number of lay-members who were in sympathy with their ministers and did not wish them to be silenced. In the Middlebury congregation the church divided and those sympathetic with the pastor who was to be silenced formed an independent congregation while at Barker Street practically the whole congregation supported the minister.

WARREN STREET MENNONITE CHURCH

The Mennonite Church at Middlebury, Indiana, from which the Warren Street congregation came, was organized as a result of Mennonites and Amish from surrounding communities moving to town.

The first meeting pertaining to the opening of work by the Mennonite Church in the town of Middlebury was held in the home of Dr. W. B. Page in August, 1902. About twelve members living in the town and its vicinity were present at the meeting. The ministers of the Forks congregation were also present but they neither discouraged nor endorsed the movement. There were about forty Mennonite members living in the town and vicinity who, however, belonged to the Forks, Shore or Clinton Churches.

During the winter of 1903 a number of the Mennonites living in Middlebury met one evening each week at the various homes for a song and prayer service and also study the Sunday School lesson for the next Sunday. These meetings led to the renting of a public hall in the spring of 1903 for worship. A Sunday School was organized and provisions made for the supplying of the pulpit by ministers from surrounding congregations.

In the winter of 1903-04 Evangelistic meetings were held, conducted by Rev. M. S. Steiner, Columbus Grove, Ohio. Weekly services were continued throughout the spring and summer which finally resulted in the organization of a congregation July, 1904, with Rev. A. J. Hostettler, who had recently moved into the community, as minister and Rev. D. J. Johns of Goshen, Indiana, as bishop. The charter membership of the church was about thirty-two. By the spring of 1906 it had increased to forty-five and for the next seven or eight years the congregation kept on increasing about twenty-five a year.

In December, 1907, Simon S. Yoder, who was serving as deacon in the Forks congregation, was ordained as minister

in the Middlebury Church. In 1911 the congregation purchased three vacant lots in Middlebury and erected a new church building which was a credit to the Mennonite Church of that day. J. C. Hershberger, a deacon of the Clinton Brick congregation, became a member of the Middlebury congregation in 1911 and served as its deacon until his death in 1920.[1]

Under the efficient leadership of Rev. S. S. Yoder the church made rapid progress. Rev. Yoder served on a number of church committees and was chairman of the Executive Sunday School Committee from 1916 until 1923. He was one of the pastors referred to in the former discussion who could not conscientiously carry out the Conference resolution on the dress question and so he with quite a large number of the members of the Middlebury congregation organized an independent church and became the Warren Street Mennonite Church. From 1923 to 1926 the congregation existed independent of any Conference affiliation. In the 1926 conference of the Central Conference Mennonite Church held at Washington, Illinois, the Warren Street congregation was accepted as a member of the Conference. Rev. S. S. Yoder is the pastor at the present time. The membership of the congregation is eighty-one.

BARKER STREET MENNONITE CHURCH

The original Barker Street Mennonite Church is located two miles northwest of Vistula, Indiana, in Elkhart County. It received its name from the name of the road or street on which it is located. This church community was founded by Amish families coming from Ohio and Pennsylvania. In 1861 the first Amish family, John Plank's, came. In 1863 came the Yoder families, Jonas Kurtz, Abram Zook, the Kings, Kauffmans and Jonathan Hartzler, Sr. and Jonathan Hartzler, Jr. In 1864

1. The data for the history of Warren St. congregation was received from Rev. S. S. Yoder, the pastor.

came the Troyer families, Joseph Kauffman, and Jephthah Plank, and in 1870 Solomon Zooks and Joseph Zeiglers.

Services were begun in this community in 1863 in a small schoolhouse across the road from the present Barker Street church house. In 1866 a new schoolhouse was built one mile west of the old schoolhouse and the services were held there until the church house was built. The first Sunday School in this community was organized in 1868 with Samuel Hartzler as superintendent. It was conducted in the German language as was also the church service. The first revival meeting was held by Rev. J. S. Coffman in 1879.

From 1863 to 1867 the pulpit was supplied by ministers from surrounding church communities. In 1866 occurred the first ordination in this congregation when Christian Warye was ordained to the office of deacon. He is the only deacon the church ever had. In 1867 Jonas Yoder was ordained minister but soon left for West Liberty, Ohio. John Hartzler was also ordained to the ministry but soon left for Cass County, Missouri. In 1869 Rev. Joseph Yoder, a minister from Topeka, Indiana, moved to Barker Street. He was ordained bishop a few years later. Rev. Yoder was pastor until about 1883 when he left for Iowa.

From 1883 to 1892 the church had no resident pastor but Rev. J. F. Funk and Rev. Samuel Yoder of Elkhart, Indiana, supplied the pulpit, preaching every two weeks. This is the time when English services were introduced. About 1892 Rev. Harvey Friesner, who had been ordained minister at Bronson, Mich., in 1876 moved to Barker Street and became the pastor of the Church.

In about 1892 Rev. John Blosser of Ohio and Rev. J. S. Hartzler of Indiana held meetings in the schoolhouse of Barker Street and after the meetings urged the congregation to build a church house. The church house was built in 1893. The church was never very successful from the standpoint of large membership. The largest membership the church perhaps ever had was sixty-four. This is largely due to the fact that the

soil is sandy and has not been very productive and so the community has not had very many permanent farmers.[2]

One of the outstanding events in the history of the Barker Street congregation was the revival meetings held by a gospel team from Goshen College. This was the first gospel team sent out by the extension department of the Y. M. C. A. of Goshen College. The team was composed of Rev. Amos Geigley, Aaron Eby, Walter E. Yoder, Orie Miller and Wm. B. Weaver who was chairman of the extension department. The gospel team found when they arrived on the field that the church was merely existing. Very few of the members attended the regular services of the church. At the close of the series of meetings by the gospel team there were forty-three confessions. The majority of these converts were young people and parents. There were bright prospects for the starting of a church which would serve the community. The gospel team kept in touch with the forty-three converts and all but two expressed their desire to unite with the church at Barker Street but when the dress regulations of the Conference were presented as a qualification for membership only eleven of the converts decided to join the congregation; the other converts joined some other church. The Indiana-Michigan Mission Board took charge of the work and with the assistance of Bishop D. J. Johns made provision for supplying the pulpit of the church. Wm. B. Weaver was licensed to preach and served the congregation during the year 1913. He was assisted by Walter E. Yoder, who had charge of the song service.[3] June 4, 1914, the Mission Board took complete control of the congregation. In the spring of 1914 W. W. Oesch moved in the Barker Street community from Cass County, Missouri, and was superintendent of the

2. The material for the early history of Barker St. was taken from the Rural Evangel of Jan. 1, 1922. This paper was published by the Indiana-Michigan Mission Board. Bishop J. K. Bixler of Elkhart, Ind., was editor of the paper, also author of the history of Barker St.

3. The report of Gospel team's work is taken from the writer's records, he being a member of the team.

Sunday School. He was ordained to the ministry October 18, 1914, by Bishop Jacob K. Bixler and was given charge of the congregation. Rev. Oesch served as pastor under the Mission Board from 1914 to 1923. For reasons stated in a former discussion Rev. Oesch and the congregation were excommunicated from the Conference, December 10, 1923. The congregation continued its regular worship in the Barker Street church until April of 1924. At this time the congregation, feeling that there was a larger field of labor in the Mottville community, changed their place of worship from the Barker Street Church to the village of Mottville, two miles north of the church. Here a church building was purchased and a union church and Sunday School started. This union service has been continued now for several years with good results. The Mennonite congregation, however, maintained its identity and communion was regularly observed at the Barker Street Church.[4]

At a meeting of the congregation held August 22, 1926, a resolution was unanimously passed requesting admittance into the Central Conference Mennonite Church. The congregation's request was granted at the 1926 conference held at Washington, Illinois. The membership of the congregation at present is thirty-two and Rev. W. W. Oesch is serving as the pastor (1926).

4. The later history of the congregation was given by Rev. W. W. Oesch, the present pastor.

CHAPTER XV.

HOME MISSIONS.

Home Missions in the Central Conference Mennonite Church refers particularly to the expansion of the church in the rural and city fields. This discussion will deal with the organizing of the committees and boards for carrying on Home Mission work and then second with the work that was done.

THE HOME MISSION COMMITTEE

The first step in the establishing of an organization for Home Mission work was taken at the church conference held at the North Danvers Church September 10-11, 1908. At this meeting an evangelizing committee of three was appointed by the Conference which was to take care of the extension work in the home field. The members of this committee were Rev. Peter Schantz, Rev. Joseph Zehr and Rev. Andrew Vercler. In the 1909 conference held at Aurora, Nebraska, September 22-23 this committee was called the Home Mission Committee. At this same conference, at the first delegates' meeting held in the conference, a resolution was passed favoring the incorporation of Home and Foreign mission work. A special meeting was called October 13 and 14, 1909, at the Y. M. C. A. at Bloomington, Illinois, to receive the report of the committee that had been appointed and to consolidate the home and foreign work. The name selected for the new organization was the Central Mennonite Board of Home and Foreign Missions. The number of the members of this board was seven, three for the foreign field, three for the home field and one representing the church at large. This board, with a few changes which will be noted later, is the present organization for home and foreign mission work. The Home Mission Committee on this board looks after the evangelization and extension work in the home field. Rev.

Peter Schantz was a member of this committee from its beginning until his death in 1925, and chairman of the committee until 1921. Rev. Andrew Vercler has served as treasurer from the beginning and is serving in that capacity at the present time. The present committee (1926) is: Rev. Allen Miller, Chairman; Rev. Andrew Vercler, treasurer; Rev. George Gundy, Sam Stuckey and F. E. Risser. Under the supervision and guidance of this committee the church has established three mission stations and has increased its amount of giving from year to year. It is interesting to note that from July 1, 1911, to June 30, 1912, the church raised one thousand seven hundred and sixty-two dollars and eighty-five cents for Home Missions while in the same time 1924 and 1925 the church raised six thousand three hundred and twenty-six dollars and fifty cents and the budget for home missions is sixty-five hundred dollars.

GENERAL HOME MISSION WORK

Just when the home mission work of the Central Conference Mennonite Church began is difficult to determine. It would depend on a definition of the term home missions. As an organized activity of the Conference it began in 1908, but before this time there was a great deal of expansion work done in the home field and also money given to home mission work. In a report given of the activities of the North Danvers Church in 1892, Rev. Stuckey states that the church gave ninety dollars to home missions. The different congregations which later formed the Conference helped to support mission work in other Mennonite groups and also supported institutions of other denominations. There was also a great deal of home mission work done by the congregations before 1908 in the establishment of Sunday Schools in schoolhouses in various communities and also in extending the borders of the church. As stated before from the mother church at North Danvers a number of new congregations were established. Even in the days of Rev. Jonathan Yoder he saw an opportunity at Washington, Illinois,

to do home mission work and suggested services to be held there. Father Stuckey had a missionary spirit and a vision of extension work. He travelled over the states of Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Nebraska, Michigan, Kansas and Missouri in the interests of needy congregations, ordaining ministers and bishops, dedicating churches and establishing new congregations. Rev. Peter Schantz with his spirit of missionary adventure was instrumental in the establishing of a number of new congregations. All of this was home mission work of the church. In the mind of the writer the Central Conference Mennonite Church today is neglecting this very ripe field which Father Stuckey and Rev. Schantz saw. We are a rural people and are peculiarly adapted to this type of mission work.

MENNONITE GOSPEL MISSION, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

As an organized activity the Home Mission Committee has been responsible for the establishing of two mission stations, one in Chicago and one in Peoria and also in taking over one station in Chicago which formerly had belonged to another Mennonite group. The first mission to be established was the Home Chapel in Chicago, now called the Mennonite Gospel Mission. The committee had been investigating a number of fields for opening city mission work, but by 1909 had decided on nothing definite. Mission records show that on May 30, 1907, the Foreign Mission Committee had met at Peoria, Illinois, to look for a home mission station but nothing definite was accomplished.

It was at this time when Mr. A. B. Rutt, who had been a member of the Old Mennonites and had been doing mission work in Chicago for several years, offered his services to the Central Conference Mennonite Church. He was interested while yet in the old conference in the publishing of a young people's paper and also in more progressive mission work in the city. He finally decided to take his church membership to what he thought a more progressive body of Mennonites and so decided to come to the Central Conference Church. He wrote to Rev. Strubhar of Washington, Illinois,

expressing his desire and Rev. Strubhar arranged a meeting with him in Chicago.

The Home Mission Committee was ready for action and so they held a meeting with Mr. Rutt. Rev. Schantz had been interested in starting city work for a number of years. A few weeks after the visit with Rev Strubhar the Home Mission Committee with Rev. Allen Miller went to Chicago. While there with the assistance of Rev. Rutt they selected the site for the mission. On June 20, 1909, the first service was held in the nature of a Sunday School at 843 West Sixty-third Street. At this first meeting there were present the superintendent, one teacher and six pupils. A store building was converted into a chapel. The work progressed very rapidly the first year. In a report given by Rev. Rutt in the Evangel he says the highest attendance the first year reached eighty-five. Four services were held each Sunday and from two to four a week. The smallest attendance at any service during the year was eleven and at the Easter service the largest attendance. Monthly women's meetings were held and a Home department was organized. The workers for the first year at the mission were Rev. A. B. Rutt, his parents, Anna Augspurger, Elizabeth Streid and Edna Patton who came in October, 1909.

The Home Mission Committee realized that with the growing work another place of worship must be provided for the mission. They first decided to erect a new building and on April 27, 1910, at a Board meeting held at Bloomington they decided to buy lots. These were purchased May 25, 1910, but after further investigation they found that they were able to buy a building at the corner of Sixty-third and Carpenter Streets. It was bought in December, 1910, and in February, 1911, the mission was moved into the new quarters. This was called the Mennonite Home Chapel. The building was raised and a heating plant installed. The Home Chapel was dedicated October 27, 1912. The purchase of the lots and also of this building was made possible by the generous gift of John and Mary Rupp

of Bloomington, Illinois. They gave an initial sum of five thousand eight hundred and forty dollars and then continued gifts for the repairing of the building until it amounted to about ten thousand dollars.

The first period of mission work was from 1909-14 when the mission was under the jurisdiction of the Board. During this time Rev. Rutt was ordained Bishop by Rev. Peter Schantz April 9, 1912. Miss Streid and Miss Augspurger left after a year or so of service and Miss Edna Patton became the wife of Rev. A. B. Rutt June 21, 1911. Rev. Jacob Sommers and wife of Goodland, Indiana, volunteered for mission work at the 1910 conference. January 1, 1911, they began mission work at the Home Chapel, particularly devoting their time to rescue work . During this period of mission work Rev. Rutt organized the following activities: Sunday School, Children's Work, Junior Christian Endeavor, Boys' Club, Girls' Industrial Work, Women's Bible Class, and Home Department. Some fresh-air work was also done, Mrs. Sommer bringing children from the mission to Goodland, Indiana, August 9, 1912. In 1913 the Sunday School had an enrollment of two hundred and thirty and an average attendance of one hundred and thirty. It was Rev. Rutt's aim to make his mission self-supporting so that the Board could be relieved to establish other stations and so on March 1, 1914, it became self-governing and self-supporting and was called the First Mennonite Church of Chicago.

The second period of mission work was from 1914-17, when the mission was independent of the Board and was a member of the Conference. During this same period considerable difficulty arose between Rev. Rutt and the church. Rev. Rutt finally resigned to the official board of his church and they appealed to the Conference. The Conference accepted the resignation of Rev. Rutt and on January 2, 1917, took charge of the Mission again and placed Rev. D. D. Augspurger in charge of the work. Rev. and Mrs. Sommers, who by this time were working in the Peoria Mission, returned to Chicago and took charge of the work until arrangements could be made for work-

ers. January 3, 1918, Mr. and Mrs. L. D. Hartzler of Goshen, Indiana, took charge of the work. February 1, 1918, Miss Pearl Ramseyer of the East White Oak congregation became a worker at the Home Chapel. L. D. Hartzlers left Chicago June 25, 1918, and the work was given in charge of Rev. E. T. Rowe who had been teaching a Bible class in the mission since November, 1917. The Board officially elected Rev. Rowe January 7, 1919.

The work had suffered continually during the transition period and in 1919 the Sunday School only had sixty-six, and an average attendance of thirty-five. The work under the supervision of Rev. Rowe has continued to grow and a number of new features have been added. A Gospel car was purchased in 1919 and was dedicated at the 1919 church conference at Pekin, Illinois. With this convenience the workers are able to do considerable work in various institutions of the city such as the Cook County institution at Oak Forest or street work. An electric sign was purchased a few years ago which during evening and night flashes out the message that Jesus saves. The name of the mission was changed from Home Chapel to Mennonite Gospel Mission. The membership of the church at present is fifty-six and a Sunday School enrollment of one hundred and seventy-two. The workers at present are Rev. and Mrs. E. T. Rowe, and Miss Pearl Ramseyer.

MENNONITE GOSPEL MISSION, PEORIA, ILLINOIS.

The second mission station to be established by the Home Mission Committee was the Mennonite Gospel Mission, Peoria, Illinois. From 1914 after the Home Chapel at Chicago became self-supporting the Home Mission Committee was attempting to locate a place suitable for another mission. After careful investigation they decided on April 20, 1914, to start work in Peoria. A call was extended to Rev. Jacob Sommer and wife to take charge of the work. Rev. Sommer had been ordained as a minister in October, 1907, and became pastor of the Zion Mennonite church at Goodland, Indiana. As stated above in

the 1910 church conference he and Mrs. Sommer volunteered for mission work and finally located at Home Chapel, Chicago. Here they remained in mission work until they received the call from the Home Mission Committee to open the work in Peoria.

Rev. and Mrs. Sommer came to Peoria in 1914. They at once began to look for a suitable location and after making a survey of the field decided to establish the work at 920 North Adams Street in a vacant store building. The first services were held in the nature of a Sunday School on the morning of July 19, 1914, with an attendance of thirty-seven. In the evening of the same day the building was dedicated. A large number were present from the churches in the surrounding community which added much to the encouragement of the work at this place. Miss Luella Engel of Danvers, Illinois, became a worker at the mission in April, 1915. She served the mission until September, 1920, when she left to take nurses' training at the Mennonite Sanitarium at Bloomington, Illinois.

The work at the Peoria Mission prospered from the beginning and at the end of the first year there were forty-eight members on the membership roll. The records show that December 5, 1915, there were ninety-six in attendance in the Sunday School and one hundred and five in preaching service. The mission has at present the following activities: Preaching, Sunday School Work, Christian Endeavor Work, a Women's Missionary Society, Willing Worker's Society, and Mid-week Prayer Service. The Home Mission Committee decided the latter part of 1915 to purchase a site and erect a permanent mission building. A building of veneered brick and suitable for the various activities of the mission was erected in the summer of 1916 at 1001 North Adams Street and was dedicated September 10, 1916. The membership of the church at present (1926) is ninety-four and the enrollment in the Sunday School one hundred and ninety. The present workers are Rev. and Mrs. Jacob Sommer.

TWENTY-SIXTH STREET MISSION, CHICAGO, ILL.

The third mission under the jurisdiction of the Mission Committee is one that was established by the Old Conference of Mennonites. It was originally an outgrowth of the Mennonite Home Mission in Chicago under the superintendency of A. H. Leaman. Rev. Leaman had for years had a vision of a number of Mennonite Missions in Chicago and finally in the summer of 1906 was successful in having the second mission opened. In July of 1906 a location on Twenty-sixth Street was suggested to the local Mission Board of the Old Conference. September 24th the first service was held in a rented store room one block west of the present location. This new mission came under the superintendency of Rev. A. M. Eash. He had come to Chicago in 1904 and had worked at Rev. Leaman's mission since 1905. The work developed rapidly from the beginning. In 1910 a new mission building was erected on Twenty-sixth Street near Halstead and was dedicated in December, 1910.

Through the efficient leadership of Rev. A. M. Eash the mission made very rapid progress. Particular attention was given to the Sunday School and soon several hundred children were in attendance at the Sunday School session. Rev. Eash left the mission in 1919 and spent two years in orphanage work at Jerusalem. When he returned in 1921 the work had gone down considerably. The emphasis which was continually being placed by the Old Mennonites on customs and practices which were foreign to city folk made it difficult for him to build up the work again. The Mission Board of the Old Conference decided to sell the building and close the work. Rev. Eash and his congregation then decided to appeal to the Central Conference Mennonite Church.

The first meeting of the Mission Board to consider the proposition was held April 24, 1923. In the 1923 conference held at East White Oak the Twenty-sixth Street congregation was admitted into the Conference. After considerable negotiation with

the Mission Board of the Old Mennonites, Central Mennonite Mission Board purchased in January, 1924, the Twenty-sixth Street Mission building.

Under the administration of the Central Conference the work at the mission has again been built up and is making progress. Particular attention is given to the Sunday School with all of its departments. The church also has a weekly Bible Class, Ladies' Aid Society, Prayer Meeting and social activities for the young people. The last two years Rev. Eash has conducted a Daily Vacation Bible School with very marked success, having an attendance of nearly one hundred children. Another activity which was carried on at the mission and means a great deal to the children is placing of children from the mission in homes throughout the various congregations of the Conference. The present membership of the church is sixty-eight and the enrollment of the Sunday School is three hundred and thirty-five. Rev. and Mrs. Eash are the workers at the Mission at present (1926).

CHAPTER XVI.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES.

In a former chapter a brief history was given of the origin of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. The Conference was organized in 1907 and 1908. The significance of the name Central Conference Mennonite Church was also given. The next few chapters will discuss the institutions established by the Conference and the general activities. They will divide themselves into two groups, those activities which are carried on wholly by the Central Conference Mennonite Church and then those which are carried on in cooperation with other Mennonite bodies.

CHURCH CONFERENCES.

The Central Conference Mennonite Church holds yearly conferences convening either the latter part of August or the first week of September. These meetings are largely for the purpose of giving inspiration, encouraging the workers, preserving unity, and of giving reports of the work done throughout the year. They do not legislate for the individual congregations since each church has a congregational form of government. The reason for this type of meetings must be sought in the history of this particular group of Mennonites. In a former chapter it was stated that the Stuckey Amish, after their separation from the Amish Conference, did not affiliate with any other organization. Rev. Stuckey discouraged the idea of an organized conference for the purpose of legislation. In 1899, through the persuasion of the younger ministers, he finally gave his consent to have ministers meetings with the warning that they should be very careful what kind of an organization would be established. Because of this hesitancy on the part of Father Stuckey the first conferences were in the nature of Bible meetings. The ministers and, beginning with the second meeting, the laity met for instruction and fellowship. From 1899 to 1906

there was very little organization except what was needed for the immediate purpose of the meetings.

By 1907, however, the ministers realized that with the enlarged activities of the church, it was necessary to form a more definite organization. So in the 1907 conference at Washington, Illinois, a constitutional committee was chosen to draft a constitution for the Conference. The committee met December 10, 1907, at the North Danvers Church and made the constitution. This was then distributed to the congregations and the twelve churches, mentioned before as charter members, sent their written acceptance to the Secretary, September 10 and 11, 1908, the first annual conference was held at the North Danvers Church under the new organization. These yearly conferences, although better organized, have continued to be of an inspirational nature.

The first conferences held were only for one day. In 1908 the first two-day conference was held. At this meeting it was also decided that the business of the Conference should be placed in the hands of regularly appointed delegates. Before this the whole body of the Conference transacted the business. The first delegates session was held in the 1909 conference at Aurora, Nebraska. These delegates are appointed from each congregation on a representative basis, one delegate for every thirty communicant members, thus giving the laity a very effective representation in the work of the Conference. This has proved very satisfactory since it gives the laity an interest in the activities of the Conference. By 1911 the activities of the Conference had increased to the extent that it was necessary to have three days for the conference. The first day of the conference the morning and afternoon session is given to Sunday School and the evening session to Christian Endeavor. The other two days are taken up by the Mission Board and the Conference. In the last few years the time has been extended to four days, using the first day for delegates' sessions for the transaction of business and the evening session for a program given by the Ministerial Association. The purpose of these conferences is stated by

Rev. Aaron Augspurger who was one of the chief promoters, "The purposes of all our conferences have been for the spiritual and intellectual uplift of the members and workers as well as for laying plans for more effective work along religious lines, also to effect a more perfect union and concentrate our forces."[1] Some of the men who have served as Conference Presidents are: Rev. Aaron Augspurger was President of the first meeting held on Aug. 3, 1899 at Rev. King's home, Rev. Peter Schantz, Rev. John Kinsinger, Rev. J. P. Kohler, Rev. J. H. King, Rev. John Lehman, Rev. Emanuel Troyer, Rev. Allen Yoder and Rev. Allen Miller. Rev. Allen Miller has served the longest of any minister in the Conference, having been President nine years. He is at present (1926) the President of the Conference. The Secretaries of the Conference have been: Rev. Lee Lantz, Rev. Aaron Augspurger, Mr. M. P. Lantz, Rev. Ben Eash and Mr. E. W. Rediger. Mr. M. P. Lantz served the longest number of years as Conference Secretary. Mr. E. W. Rediger is at present (1926) Secretary of the Conference. The field secretaries have been: Rev. Peter Schantz, Rev. Emanuel Troyer and Rev. J. H. King. Rev. Schantz served the longest as field secretary. Rev. Emanuel Troyer is at present field secretary.[2]

MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION

The delegates' sessions of the Church Conference represented both the ministers and the laity. In 1899 when the Conference originated, the first meeting that was held was a Ministerial meeting. This was held at the home of Rev. J. H. King on August 3, 1899. Thirteen ministers were present at this meeting. But in the meeting held at the North Danvers Church September 26, 1899 there were a number of lay members present. The following were present: C. W. Kinsinger, J. S. Augspurger, Martin Stahley, M. L. Ramseyer,

1. The Christian Evangel, September 1910, page 27. An article by Rev. Augspurger on the Purposes of our Conference.

2. The dates of the Conferences with the names of the officers are given in a later chapter.

Peter Sharp, Jonathan Sharp, Jonathan Kauffman, John Detweiler, S. M. Stuckey, Peter Gerber, Val Birkey, J. W. Schertz, Hiram Troyer, Manasses Troyer, Mike Rebholz. The following ministers were present at the meeting held Sept 26, 1899, at the North Danvers Church: Rev. Joseph Stuckey, Rev. Peter Schantz, Rev. J. H. King, Rev. Val. Strubhar, Rev. John Stahley, Rev. John Gingerich; Rev. Joseph Zehr, Rev. Aaron Augspurger Rev. Andrew Vercler, Rev. Emanuel Troyer and Rev. Lee Lantz. All ministers at the first meetings were present except Rev. Christian Imhoff who died soon after the first meeting. Rev. John Stahly and Rev. Joseph Zehr were added to the second meeting. From 1899 all questions were decided by the whole body of Conference until 1909 when the first delegates' session was held.

By 1911 the ministers began to feel the need of a meeting particularly for ministers in which the problems of the minister and problems relating to the local congregation could be discussed. On June 23, 1911, a meeting was called of the ministers to consider the matter of organizing a Ministerial Association. At this meeting an association was formed and Rev. Emanuel Troyer was elected president and Rev. George Gundy, secretary. Rev. Troyer is at present president and Rev. Gundy was secretary until 1926 conference when Rev. Reuben Zehr was elected. At the 1911 conference at Meadows, Illinois, the delegates' session approved of this association formed, thus making it a permanent organization.

A number of problems that suggested themselves to the ministers when they met were: How to settle local church difficulties when help was needed; how to secure young men for the ministry; how to finance the publication interests and how to adopt better methods to finance missions. The Ministerial Association met twice a year usually at the time of the Mission Board meeting in January and then at the time of the conference in September.

In 1925 it was decided to hold quarterly meetings. One of these quarterly meetings is to be in the nature of a ministers'

outing for the purpose of developing the social life of the ministers. In the summer of 1924 a number of ministers had spent a day by the river. As a result of this meeting another ministers' outing was held on July 27th. Fourteen ministers with their families were present. It was decided at this meeting to make the outing an annual occasion, placing it under the jurisdiction of the Ministerial Association. The other meetings are for the purpose of discussing ministers' problems and suggesting better methods of church work. One of the important committees of the Ministerial Association is the Ordination and Installation Committee. It helps congregations to supply the pulpit, encourages young men to enter the ministry, and ordains and installs pastors in various congregations. The last few years the Ministerial Association has held inspirational meetings open to the public, on the evening of the day when the delegates' session met at the conference.

CHRISTIAN WORKERS' CONFERENCE AND INSTITUTES.

There were a number of causes that led to the organization of the Christian Workers' Conference. In the first place the Conference itself, being organized in 1907-08, began to do more systematic work and carry on more organized activities; in the second place the work itself expanded and required more and better trained workers. Sunday Schools were introducing departmental work and more modern methods of conducting the Sunday School and Christian Endeavor Societies were being organized throughout the church. This development of the work and the increasing need of more workers created a desire on the part of the leaders for more united efforts on the part of Christian workers in the different congregations. On the other hand the conditions created by the World War brought discouragement to a number of the younger Christian workers.

The first step in the organization of a Christian Workers' Conference was taken when Rev. Allen Miller, then president

of the Church Conference, appointed a committee composed of Rev. J. H. King, Rev. Emanuel Troyer, and Rev. Aaron Augspurger to prepare a program having in mind the needs of the Christian workers. The first Christian Workers' Conference was held December 31, 1917, to January 4, 1918, at the Normal Mennonite Church, Normal, Illinois. This conference was held in connection with the Mission Board meeting. These Christian Workers' Conferences were held each year in connection with the meeting of the Mission Board until 1925. The purpose of these meetings was to give inspiration and encouragement to the workers and to develop a stronger bond of unity among the workers of the different congregations.

The Christian Workers' meeting held at Carlock, Illinois, January 11-18, 1925, marks the transition from the Christian Workers' Conference to the Christian Workers' Institute. In this year the last Christian Workers' Conference was held and the first Institute. The ministers of a few of the congregations surrounding the Carlock Mennonite Church met and arranged a program for a Christian Workers' Institute. It was suggested that it be held at the time of the Christian Workers' Conference and Mission Board meeting. This was approved by the Conference and so the Institute was given the forenoon sessions and the Christian Workers' Conference and Mission Board the afternoon and evening sessions, of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of the week. The first Institute was a great success. The first day opened with an attendance of fifty and by Friday the attendance had increased to one-hundred eighty-nine. This kind of meeting seemed to meet the needs of the workers better and so the Christian Workers' Conference has been discontinued and the Institute has taken its place. The chief difference in the two meetings lies in the fact that in the Christian Workers' Conference the meetings are entirely inspirational with no attempt at giving definite instruction or systematic teaching.

The purpose of the Institute is to give courses of study in Bible, Music, Christian Endeavor work and Missions. It is more the nature of a training school for workers who are not privi-

leged to attend our colleges and seminaries. This type of meeting seemed to meet a felt need in the Conference and so in the 1925 conference at Silver Street, Goshen, Indiana, the question of Institutes was discussed at the delegates' session held September 1st. A motion was then made that a committee be appointed to organize and conduct Institutes throughout the Conference and also to make plans for the promoting of mission work. This committee met at the Twenty-sixth Street Mission, Chicago, September 25, 1925. They divided the Conference into six districts according to the location of the churches. The districts were as follows: No. 1—Silver Street, Eighth Street and Topeka; No. 2—East White Oak, Carlock, Normal, North Danvers, Danvers and Congerville; No. 3—Calvary, South Washington, Peoria, Pekin; No. 4—Meadows, Flanagan; No. 5—our two missions in Chicago; No. 6—Goodland, Kouts. Special provision was made for our churches that were too far from any others to be included in a district. Arrangements were made by which these churches could hold two or three-day Institutes as individual congregations. This movement which had been inaugurated by a few interested individuals became a Conference movement. In the autumn of 1925 Institutes were held in districts No. 2 and No. 3.

In the 1926 conference held at Washington, Ill., the next step was taken in relation to the Institute work. The delegates' session elected a Christian Workers' Institute Committee whose sole work was to plan for Institutes throughout the Conference. The committee met at the Mennonite Gospel Mission, Chicago, Sept. 25, 1926, and planned the work for the year. The following courses were recommended by the committee: Bible, Sunday School, Christian Endeavor, Missions, Church Music, Peace, Stewardship, Church History, Mennonite History and Principles and Our Conference and Her Institutions. Of these courses each Institute can select four or five. Suggestive leaders were also given. The committee published a bulletin which was distributed to all the congregations giving needed information concerning the Institutes. The time that these Institutes

have been in operation has been entirely too short to judge what shall be their future but it is believed that they will bring the advantages of college and seminary to the very doors of Christian workers in the various congregations.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CONFERENCE.

The first Sunday School in the Central Conference Mennonite Church was started by Rev. Joseph Stuckey and Rev. Jonathan Strubhar in the Strubhar schoolhouse in about 1867. The Sunday School was started in the schoolhouse because there was considerable opposition by some of the older people in having Sunday School in the church. In the summer of 1869, however, the first Sunday School was held in the Yoder church house at the Rock Creek Fair Grounds. In the same year the Amish also started a Sunday School in the Grant schoolhouse in Dry Grove Township. A Sunday School was also started in the East Washington district by Peter Stuckey about 1868. As noted in the history of the congregations the origin of the congregation can often be traced to the establishment of a Sunday School in the community. This was true of such congregations as Bethel Mennonite, Pekin, Illinois; Meadows Mennonite, Anchor Mennonite, Kouts Mennonite and others. In some of the congregations Sunday Schools were started with the establishment of the congregations. The first Sunday School session to be held in connection with the morning church service was at the North Danvers Church about 1875.

From the beginning of Sunday Schools in 1867 to about 1890 all of them were conducted in the German language. The older people used the German Bible while the younger people and the children used the German A B C Primer. The reasons for the introduction of the English language has been discussed in a former chapter. It should be said here, however, that in a number of the congregations there was considerable difficulty in making the transition. In some of the congregations it was necessary to hold the English Sunday School in the afternoon

rather than in connection with the preaching service. In others the English was introduced by forming one class and then gradually introducing English into the other classes. With the introduction of the English language, lesson helps were also introduced. Many of our Sunday Schools first used a series of printed Bible lessons published by the Mennonite Publishing House at Elkhart, Indiana, under the direction of Rev. J. F. Funk. In about 1905 the International Sunday School Quarterly was introduced into the Conference. There are still a few congregations at present in which a class or two use German material.

Modern methods of Sunday School work were adopted later on, such as the departmental organization as early as 1909, the use of Graded Lessons as early as 1906, the introduction of Teacher Training Classes by 1905 and organized Bible Classes by 1908. In 1917 quite a few of the congregations remodeled their church buildings providing for a basement and class rooms for Sunday School work. In the 1922 conference the church decided to use the Scottdale Sunday School supplies which are furnished the Sunday Schools through the Central Mennonite Publication Board.

The rapid progress of the Sunday School work after 1890 and the introduction of modern methods created a need for closer cooperation and for meetings to discuss common Sunday School problems. Through the suggestion of the East White Oak Church under the leadership of Rev. Schantz and Rev. Troyer as ministers and Daniel Augustin as Sunday School worker, a meeting of the Sunday School workers of the Conference was called to meet at the East White Oak Church September 13, 1896. At this meeting it was decided to have another one the next year. September 2, 1897, the meeting was held at the East Washington Church. Here it was decided to have Sunday School Conferences yearly. The third Sunday School Conference was held at Flanagan June 2, 1898. By 1900 the Sunday School meetings were held in connection with the church conference. This has continued until the pres-

ent time. A morning and afternoon session at the time of the church conference is devoted to Sunday School work.

Soon after 1900 a Sunday School Association was organized with a president, secretary and various departmental officers. At the present time this association has a President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer and the following departmental officers: Elementary, Young Peoples, Cradle Roll, Missionary, Temperance and Home Department Superintendents. This forms the Executive Committee which is to look after the Sunday School work in the Conference throughout the year. The president of the association at present (1926) is A. H. Schertz, Metamora, Illinois, and the secretary-treasurer is Pearl Ramseyer, Chicago, Illinois.

In the conference of 1914 held at Carlock, Illinois, September 9th, a resolution was passed at the delegates' session to adopt a Sunday School Standard. The committee appointed to work out the Standard was Rev. Lee Lantz, Rev. Emanuel Troyer and Rev. Valentine Strubhar. The Sunday School Standard suggested by this committee was adopted at the 1915 conference held at Silver Street Church, Goshen, Indiana, August 25, 1915. These Standards were later printed by the Central Mennonite Publication Board and are placed in the Sunday School rooms of a number of our Sunday Schools throughout our Conference. In the church conference at Meadows in 1922 the delegates' session approved of having Sunday School delegates' meetings at the conference. Such a session was held at the 1923 conference at East White Oak. These Sunday School delegates' sessions have been discontinued for reasons unknown to the writer. They are very much needed for a discussion of Sunday School problems and for the planning of aggressive work for the next year. There is also a need for revising the Sunday School Standard and bringing it nearer to the requirements of present Sunday School Standards.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR UNION

Christian Endeavor Societies, as the Sunday School, was an organization which was borrowed from other denominations. It is significant to note that only eleven years after the first Christian Endeavor Society was organized in the United States, the first one was organized in the North Danvers Church in the year 1892. Mr. Eli Sharp, then of Congerville, Illinois, who had come in touch with Christian Endeavor work while living in Minnesota, was largely responsible for organizing the first society in the North Danvers Church. This one was soon followed by societies in other congregations. As new congregations were established after 1892 they organized Christian Endeavor work. The first societies in our congregations had very little organization. In fact some of them were rather Bible Reading meetings with practically no organization. Rev. Eugene Augspurger has an interesting discussion in the March, 1911, Christian Evangel on the condition of the Christian Endeavor Societies of our Conference. He emphasizes the fact that they need to be better organized and that the society should feel under obligation to accept the pledge.

It is to be noted then that the first step in the forming of the Christian Endeavor Union in our Conference was the establishment of these individual societies in the various congregations. In the 1911 conference a Field Committee was appointed to visit all of the Christian Endeavor Societies and to report at the next conference. There were five members on the committee and they visited nine societies. They discovered that there were a number of the congregations that were not having any Christian Endeavor work. In the second place they found that societies were poorly organized and were in great need of help. About this time a field secretary was

appointed to visit the various societies and give them the needed help. Miss Elizabeth Streid who had been a worker at the Home Chapel in Chicago was chosen as field secretary. To her must be given a great deal of credit for better Christian Endeavor work in the Conference. She visited the various societies throughout the Conference and helped them to organize and to establish real Christian Endeavor work. She went to Indiana October, 1911, and was instrumental in starting Christian Endeavor Societies in the congregations there.

The second step in Christian Endeavor organization came in the holding of Christian Endeavor Rallies. Largely through the efforts of Miss Streid the first Christian Endeavor Rally was held at the East White Oak Church July 19, 1913. These Rallies have been held every year in the months of May, June or July. The first Christian Endeavor Rally in Indiana was held July 16, 1916, at the Silver Street Church. The Conference at present is divided into the two districts, Illinois and Indiana for the holding of these Christian Endeavor Rallies. They have helped to bring greater unity and greater efficiency in Christian Endeavor work.

The third step in the developing of Christian Endeavor work is the organizing of the Christian Endeavor Union. In the conference programs from year to year up to 1913 subjects relating to Christian Endeavor work were placed on the conference program. In the conference of 1913 the first Christian Endeavor delegates' meeting was held. At this meeting it was decided to make a Christian Endeavor Constitution, providing for a Christian Endeavor Union. They also requested the Conference Program Committee to make their own programs for the conference. Both these requests were granted them and in 1914 the constitution was accepted and the Christian Endeavor Union was formed. The Union has an Executive Committee composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer, Junior Superintendent, Intermediate Superintendent and Field Secretary. This committee is to direct the

work of Christian Endeavor throughout the year. Mr. Lyle Strubhar of Washington, Illinois, is president and Miss Clara Kinsinger, of Meadows, Illinois is secretary-treasurer at the present time (1926). There are twelve societies in the Union at present with a membership of seven hundred and ninety-four.

In 1917 it was decided by the Union to use the regular Christian Endeavor topics of the United Society of Christian Endeavor. In the Church Conference of 1922 the Central Mennonite Publication Board recommended that the Sunday School notes should be omitted in the Evangel and more space be given for Christian Endeavor notes. Also that a committee of five be appointed to go over the Christian Endeavor topics and make changes that might be beneficial for our needs. This committee has met from year to year and has revised the topics and Christian Endeavor editors have been appointed from year to year to discuss the topics in the church paper. There is yet much work to be done along the line of better organization and greater efficiency in Christian Endeavor work.

PUBLICATION WORK

The Publication Work of the Conference, as most of the other activities, grew out of the vision of a few of the leaders of the Conference. The three men who should be particularly mentioned in relation to the beginning of Conference publications were Rev. Peter Schantz, Rev. A. B. Rutt and Rev. Aaron Augspurger. The first publication work of the Conference was the publishing of a church paper called the Christian Evangel. For a number of years, especially after 1905 when the Conference began foreign mission work, Rev. Peter Schantz was urging the matter of a church paper. He said that the church needed a church paper because the different congregations should know what the Conference is doing as a group of churches and in the second place we should have it for the benefit of our people. He had urged Rev. Augspurger to take up the matter but Rev. Augspurger did not feel that he was

capable of doing it. This was before the Home Mission work started in Chicago in 1909.

In 1909 Rev. A. B. Rutt came into the Conference and was appointed as superintendent of the Home Chapel in Chicago. He had been interested for a number of years in the publishing of a paper particularly for young people. The mission work in Chicago was opened in June, 1909. In the 1909 church conference held at Aurora, Nebraska, September 22nd and 23rd, the question of a church paper came up at the delegates' session. This was the first delegates' session held at the conference. The proposal of a church paper met with general approval and the delegates voted that one should be printed. Rev. Augspurger and Rev. Rutt were appointed to establish the paper, and see how it would work out by the time of the 1910 conference. The plans for the church paper were presented at a Mission Board meeting held at Bloomington May 25, 1910. The Board approved of such a step but was not in a position to sanction it officially. Rev. A. B. Rutt who had experience in publication work was suggested as the editor. It was he who suggested the name Christian Evangel for our church paper.

The first issue of the Christian Evangel appeared July 1910. The first three issues of July, August and September were published by Rev. Rutt from the Home Chapel in Chicago. The paper had not yet been accepted as the official organ of the Conference. In the 1910 conference held at Flanagan, Illinois, September 21-22, the Conference accepted the paper as their official organ.

The Christian Evangel from July, 1910, to February, 1913, had two parts; first that published by the Mennonites and second the part of the paper that was under the jurisdiction of the United Religious Press. This was the interdenominational part of the paper. At the 1910 conference Rev. A. B. Rutt was officially chosen as the first editor. There were three departments established with three associate editors. Rev. Aaron Augspurger was editor of the doctrinal; Rev. L. B. Haigh of the missionary; and Rev. Lee Lantz of the educational department.

The purpose of the paper may well be stated by the points emphasized by the editor in the first issue. First, the Evangel stands for the highest type of unity. This means the unity among the ministers, Christian workers and the various congregations. This unity was even to be extended to other Mennonite groups. At one time there were representatives from five different Mennonite groups writing for the paper. In 1911 Rev. Rutt plead for an All-Mennonite paper and a United Publication Board. In the March 22, 1911, United Mission Board meeting Rev. Aaron Augspurger and Rev. Rutt invited the Defenseless Mennonites to join us in the paper. Second, the editor emphasized the need of a church paper to present the needs and achievements of Christian work, especially our mission work. Third, it shall be the purpose of the paper to uphold the doctrines of the church and finally, it is to be for the purpose of training youth for the mission field.

January 2, 1912, a publication committee was appointed which was to look after the financial interests of the paper. In this same year a business manager was appointed to assist the editor. A book agency was also established in connection with the church paper. The paper was very well supported from the beginning and it was urged by the church leaders. In 1911 Rev. Vercler travelled throughout the churches in the interests of the Evangel. In 1917 the publishing of the Evangel was put in the hands of a publication board. The business manager and editor were to be on the board. By 1919 there were eight hundred subscribers to the Christian Evangel. Beginning with January, 1917, an attempt was made to cooperate with the Mennonite Brethren in Christ in the publishing of the church paper. This did not seem very successful and so by 1918 the Evangel again became the paper of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. The following have served as editors for the Christian Evangel: Rev. A. B. Rutt, July, 1910—January, 1915; Rev. Lee Lantz, February, 1915—September, 1916; Rev. Ben Eash, October, 1916—September, 1919; Rev. A. S. Bechtel, October, 1919—September, 1920; Rev. L. B. Haigh, October, 1920—

September, 1923; Rev. William B. Weaver, October, 1923—September 1925; Rev. H. E. Nunemaker, October, 1925—September, 1926. The Central Mennonite Publication Board at the present time has charge of all the publication work of the Conference. They publish the Evangel, sell books and Bibles and Sunday School supplies, and publish the Year Book. Rev. Wm. B. Weaver was elected editor at the 1926 conference and is at present the editor. The Evangel has seven hundred and thirty subscribers.

In the 1921 conference held at Aurora, Nebraska, it was decided at the delegates' session to publish a Year Book for the Conference. Rev. W. H. Grubb, pastor of the Normal Mennonite Church, was largely responsible for this decision. He was appointed editor and issued the first Year Book in 1922. In the 1924 conference it was decided that the Year Book should be a permanent publication. Rev. W. H. Grubb has published all of the Year Books with the exception of the 1926 which was published by Rev. H. E. Nunemaker, of Danvers, Illinois. The 1927 Year Book was published by Rev. Wm. B. Weaver. The Christian Evangel has been one of the most important sources for material for this history. The field of opportunity for the Publication Board is very great. In the second year of the publication of the church paper the Conference expressed itself as favoring Conference ownership of a printing plant. This, with a book-store, is the greatest need of the Central Conference Mennonite Publication Board today.

LADIES' AID SOCIETIES

The first Ladies' Aid Societies in the Conference were organized about the year 1909. They originated very largely as a result of our city mission work. The Home Chapel in Chicago appealed to different congregations for help in feeding and clothing the poor. These societies were organized to supply this need. They operated independently in the various congregations until at the time of the 1925 conference. There

are twenty societies in the Conference. These societies have a large field of service inasmuch as they supply our institutions and home and foreign missions with food and clothing. They have also done a great deal in the support of the activities of the congregation.

In the 1925 delegates' session held September 1st an appeal came from the ladies that there should be a more effective Ladies' Aid organization throughout the Conference. A motion was then made that a committee be appointed to formulate plans for such an organization. The committee elected Mrs. Emanuel Troyer, Mrs. L. D. Hartzler, Mrs. W. B. Page and Mrs. S. E. Maurer. Mrs. Emanuel Troyer was elected president of the organization and Mrs. S. E. Maurer secretary-treasurer. This committee has arranged the work in such a way that each institution is supported a particular month with food and clothing by a particular congregation. The secretary visited the various institutions and received a list of the needs of each. This organization has had one year of existence and thus far has proved itself to be a very great success. The purpose of the organization is to unify the work of the societies and to encourage the organization of new ones. In these two purposes the society has been successful in the last year.

In the first year's work of the Conference Ladies' Aid there was a great deal of pioneering that needed to be done. After the work was started the secretary realized that there had been no provisions made for the financial support of the work of the organization. The committee found it necessary to borrow money before they could enter the work. Mrs. S. E. Maurer, the secretary, then asked permission to undertake to secure money. The request was granted and effort put forth to secure the amount needed. She first asked the local aid societies for donations. Also various individuals gave liberally after the work was explained to them. By June 30, 1926, the secretary had received $208.

This organization also wished to do something for the

foreign field. They wished to create a fund with which to purchase cloth for the foreign mission work. By January 18, 1926, through the generous gift of Mrs. C. W. Kinsinger of Danvers, Illinois, of $100, $129 was raised for this work. A bale of good heavy blue denim, such as the African natives like, was bought and sent to Africa. This meant a great deal to our foreign mission work since one of the primary wants of the natives is cloth. This to the mind of the missionary solves a very difficult problem in the Congo from the fact that it sufficiently clothes the native so that he will work for the mission and not go to an ungodly training company to buy his cloth. The total receipts of the organization from September 1, 1925, to September 30, 1926, was $1191.88. The expenditure was $1069.-61.

At the 1926 conference the first delegates' meeting of the Ladies' Aid was held. At that meeting the work of the society for the last year was discussed and the committee and the delegates felt that the work of the Conference Ladies' Aid was very much worth while.

CENTRAL MENNONITE BOARD OF HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The first step in the missionary work of the Central Conference Mennonite Church began at the church conference held at Meadows, Illinois, September 13-14, 1905. Two strong missionary addresses were given, one by Alma Doering, a returned missionary from Swedish Mission Congo Belge, Africa, and the other by Charles E. Hurlburt, President and director of the African Inland Mission. The addresses so stirred the Conference that they decided they should do something for dark Africa, but the Conference realized that organization was necessary for carrying on foreign mission work. The organization resulted in two boards, the one the Foreign Mission Board of our own Conference and the other a joint board with the Defenseless Mennonites. Since foreign work is a cooperative activity it

will be left for a later chapter, and only the Central Conference organization will be discussed here.

On December 1, 1905, a meeting of ministers and delegates of the different congregations was called to meet at the East White Oak Church for the purpose of organizing. After considerable discussion a motion was made that a temporary mission committee be elected to hold office until the next regular conference. The committee of three elected were: Rev. Valentine Strubhar, president; Rev. Joseph King, secretary; and S. E. Maurer, treasurer. S. E. Maurer has served as treasurer until the present time (1926). In the conference of 1906, held at East White Oak Sept. 13, this temporary committee was re-elected to succeed itself. This was called the Foreign Mission Committee.

After the establishing of home mission work in 1909 a purchasing committee consisting of Rev. Peter Schantz, John Ropp and Rev. A. B. Rutt was also elected. Up to 1909 the Foreign Mission Committee and the Home Mission Committee, which was established in 1908, were independent of each other. During the 1909 conference at Aurora, Nebraska, the question was discussed in one of the delegates' sessions of incorporating mission work. It was discovered that it was necessary to incorporate to do business with foreign governments. It was decided to incorporate home and foreign work only and not the conference organization. The Home and Foreign Mission Committee were elected as a committee to secure the incorporation papers. October 13-14, 1909, the conference was held at the Y. M. C. A. at Bloomington, Illinois. Here the home and foreign mission work was consolidated. The name of the new organization was the Central Mennonite Board of Home and Foreign Missions. Its purpose was to be evangelization, support home and foreign work, receive and hold all donations made for mission purposes. The number of members of the board at first was seven. In the September Evangel, 1910, Rev. A. B. Rutt writes suggesting a larger and more representative board. In the 1910 conference, held at Flanagan, the delegates decided

to enlarge the Mission Board. They decided that there should be twenty-five members on the board, fifteen members representing the fifteen congregations at that time in the conference, seven members representing the Home and Foreign Mission Committee, and three representing the Publication Board. Today the membership of the Board is determined by representation from the congregations. This Board today has three committees: the Executive Committee, consisting of President, Vice-president, Secretary and the two Treasurers from the Home and Foreign Committees; the Foreign Mission Committee; and third, the Home Mission Committee. The Foreign and Home Mission Committees do practically all of the work of the Board. Rev. J. H. King is president of the Foreign Mission Committee and also of the Board. Rev. Allen Miller is chairman of the Home Mission Committee and Rev. Andrew Vercler, treasurer. This Mission Board holds yearly meetings in the month of January. At these meetings business is transacted and an inspirational program given. It is the purpose of these meetings to inform the church concerning mission work done in the home and foreign fields and to suggest plans for future expansion. The new board with twenty-five members was reorganized on January 2, 1911, and on January 2, 1912, this newly organized board began its work.

The Mission Board at present is quite large since the size of the Board is determined by the membership of the congregations. There is one representative for every one hundred members and two for congregations with a membership over one hundred. All ministers are members of the board.

CHAPTER XVIII.

COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES.

The Central Conference Mennonite Church is the eighth in size of the seventeen groups of Mennonites and Amish in America. The question that naturally arises is, what is the attitude of the Central Conference Mennonite Church to these other Mennonite groups.

THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION.

The spirit of cooperation has been found in the Central Conference Mennonite Church from the days of Father Stuckey. His records reveal the fact that he was in very close touch with other Mennonite Groups. He visited churches of the old Mennonite conferences and cooperated with some of their leaders; he was also in close touch with the General Conference of Mennonites. As stated before a report of the North Danvers Church is found in the 1890 conference report of the General Conference of Mennonites. A number of the leaders of the Old Conference and General Conference also visited the churches which now form this Conference. Bishops and ministers of the Old Conference preached in Father Stuckey's congregation and the surrounding congregations. The Middle District of the General Conference of Mennonites held its 1898 conference session in a grove a few miles from Danvers, Ill., and was entertained by Father Stuckey's church.

In 1898 when the old Mennonites began mission work in India an attempt was made by the Central Conference to cooperate with them in their mission activities. Again when the Central Conference began foreign mission work in Africa in the period from 1905-1909, Rev. Menno S. Steiner attended the mission meeting at Meadows, Ill., and gave a stirring missionary address. He was interested in a united foreign mission work by the Mennonite groups. He suggested that the Old Mennonites and our Conference work together and offered to

present the matter to his board. It seemed, however, that the time was not yet ripe for such a movement.

Another evidence of the spirit of cooperation is found in the launching of the Christian Evangel in 1910. It was the purpose of Rev. Rutt as editor of the Evangel to make it an All-Mennonite paper. A number of editorials were written in the early issues of the Evangels urging very close cooperation between the Mennonite groups and even suggesting a united publication board. Rev. Rutt's attitude in this matter was sanctioned and supported by the Central Conference Mission Board meeting in January, 1911. The board sanctioned the policy of Rev. Rutt of using men of other Conferences as editors of various departments. At one time there were five Conferences represented on the editorial staff. At this same board meeting a definite invitation was given to the Defenseless Mennonites to join us in our church paper. In 1917 the Evangel was published in cooperation with the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. These are evidences to show that cooperation with other Mennonite groups has been one of the fundamental principles of the Central Mennonite Church. The above facts also show that the church has not attempted to cooperate with only one group of Mennonites but with various groups. At the time of the yearly conferences invitation is always given to ministers of other Mennonite groups to meet with us in delegates' session.

This spirit of cooperation has not only been expressed in words but was expressed by a very definite conference resolution. Although the resolution is general it was particularly written as a standing invitation to the congregations who had become independent of the Old Conference and were seeking affiliation with some other Mennonite group. In the conference of 1924 held at Congerville, Illinois, the question of cooperation came up in a delegates' session, particularly as it related to the independent congregations. As a result of the discussion the president of the Conference appointed a committee, consisting of Rev. Aaron Augspurger, Rev. Emanuel Troyer and Rev. W.

B. Weaver to present a resolution expressing the attitude of our Conference toward cooperation with other groups of Mennonites. The committee presented the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted by the Conference:—"The Central Conference of Mennonites are a body of Mennonites who wish to be known as being desirous of a closer fellowship and unity between the different Mennonite Conferences, independent churches and individuals who are of kindred faith; therefore be it resolved, That we heartily invite all such groups who may be of like desire to effect with us a closer cooperation through their appointed representatives."

This Conference has not only expressed a spirit of cooperation in words and resolutions but also in various activities carried on with other groups. Practically half of the activities of the Conference are carried on in cooperation with other Mennonites. The chapters that deal with the activities of the Conference have been divided into two groups; activities for which our Conference was entirely responsible and cooperative activities. The first established cooperative activity in the Conference was foreign missions.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The missionary spirit in the Central Conference Mennonite Church dates back to the early beginning. The church has always been interested in expansion. This has been true not only in the home field but in the foreign as well. By 1890 the congregations were supporting foreign mission work in other Mennonite groups. In 1890 the North Danvers Congregation gave ninety dollars to foreign missions.

As stated before, in 1898 the leaders of the church were interested in the mission work that was begun in India by the Old Conference. This foreign mission spirit continued to grow until in the 1905 church conference held at Meadows, Illinois, September 14th. Here the first active missionary work of the Central Conference had its beginning. Two strong missionary addresses were given, one by Alma Doering who had

been sent to Congo Belge by the Christian Missionary Alliance in 1900 and had returned for her furlough, and the other by Charles E. Hurlburt, president and director of the Africa Inland Mission of British East Africa. These addresses so stirred the Conference that they decided something should be done for Dark Africa. A resolution was passed that the ministers present the matter to their congregations. This was done with the result that there came a hearty response and on December 1, 1905, a meeting of the ministers and delegates of the different congregations was held at the East White Oak Mennonite Church for the purpose of temporarily organizing for foreign mission work. After a discussion of the situation a temporary mission committee was elected, which has been given in a former chapter, and the delegates decided to send three missionaries. Since there were no volunteers from our own church the delegates decided to send any, that came well recommended, to the field. An offer was made by the African Inland Mission Board permitting the Central Conference to work in British East Africa under their jurisdiction. Certain stations were to be given to the church but the work was to be done under the supervision of the African Inland Mission.

The second important event in our foreign mission work was the decision made at the meeting of the Foreign Mission Committee at Meadows, Illinois, February 22, 1906. The committee decided to send Lawrence B. Haigh and Rose Boehning to the field. These two missionaries left in April, 1906, for British East Africa. Miss Boehning was married to Rev. L. B. Haigh in February, 1907, at the Mission Chapel of the African Inland Mission at Kijabe, British East Africa.

There are some interesting facts recorded in the secretary book of the Mission Board such as these: January 11, 1907, the Foreign Mission Committee sent letters to all the churches to set apart Sunday, January 13th, for special prayer for our mission work in Africa; January 26, 1907, the board met at S. E. Maurers; they voted to send five hundred dollars to

Africa, three hundred dollars to be used by L. B. Haigh for dwelling and two hundred dollars for his allowance. March 8, 1907, committee voted to send seven hundred and fifty dollars to Africa to build a station. Special efforts were also made to raise money throughout the churches by offerings and pledges to be used in sending volunteers to Africa. April 16, 1907, the committee went to Moody Bible Institute to hold a conference with volunteers for Africa. Mr. and Mrs. Haigh had come from this institution. Jesse Raynor, L. S. Probst, Miss Laura Collins and Miss Schoenheit were accepted and sent to the field in October, 1907.

On November 19, 1908, Mr. L. B. Haigh handed in his resignation to the African Inland Mission. His reasons were that the existing mission field was already congested and it was not advisable to establish a permanent work there. Mr. and Mrs. Haigh returned to the home field in 1909 because of the condition of Mr. Haigh's eyes and the need of medical attention. After Mr. Haigh's report to the board concerning conditions on the field it was decided to discontinue work in British East Africa and the station was sold to the African Inland Mission for six hundred dollars. The missionaries on the field were given the privilege of choosing whether they wanted to stay or return to the home field. The other four missionaries decided to stay in British East Africa.

October 13, 1909, the Home and Foreign Mission Committees were united under one board called the Central Mennonite Board of Home and Foreign Missions. On April 27, 1910, the board decided to purchase six mission stations in East Africa from the Moravian Brethren. Rev. Haigh investigated the Moravian proposition and discovered that it was too large for the Conference. He then proposed to the board an entirely new field in the Belgian Congo in Central West Africa. Miss Doering, in a letter in the Christian Evangel, February, 1911, had urged work along the Kassai River. On her return from her first furlough from the Congo Belge field in Africa she met Dr. Shepherd, a returned missionary from

West Africa who had spent twenty years in that field. The board had an interview with Dr. Shepherd May 1, 1911. Dr. Guiness of London, who represented the Belgian Congo Field, was also interviewed by the board. March 12, 1911, the board decided to send Rev. and Mrs. Haigh to the Congo to investigate the field.

Another significant event in the history of foreign mission work in the Central Conference Mennonite Church was the uniting of their foreign work with the Defenseless Mennonites. The Defenseless Mennonites had been doing foreign mission work since 1896 when they sent Miss Matilda Kohm to the Congo Belge under the Christian Missionary Alliance. Miss Kohm returned on her furlough in 1899 and returned to the field in 1900 with Miss Alma Doering. After Miss Doering's first furlough in 1906 the Defenseless Mennonites began foreign mission work in British East Africa under the same Board as the Central Conference Mennonite Church, called the Africa Inland Mission.

As stated above, in 1908 the Central Conference discontinued work in British East Africa. The Defenseless Mennonites discontinued at the same time. These two groups now looked for a new field which had never been evangelized. Desiring to start a work independent of any other mission boards, the Defenseless Mennonites and Central Conference Mennonites realized the need of united effort.

In the meeting of the Central Conference Mission Board January 2, 1911, a motion was made that the Conference join with the Defenseless Mennonites in doing mission work in Africa. Both the Defenseless and Central Mennonite Conferences in their 1911 meetings sanctioned the uniting of the two mission boards for foreign work. On January 23, 1912, a united mission board was organized with four representatives from each Conference and was called the Congo Inland Mission Board. In the last year this board has been increased to six members from each Conference. This is the board which has jurisdiction of the mission work in the Belgian Congo. The

president of the Board is Rev. E. M. Slagel, Archbold, Ohio, secretary, Rev. Emanuel Troyer, Carlock, Illinois, and the treasurer, Rev. I. R. Detweiler, Goshen, Indiana.

Rev. and Mrs. L. B. Haigh were sent out by the Congo Inland Mission to investigate the field and attempt to locate new stations. They left America April 15, and arrived in the Belgian Congo September 15, 1911. They stopped in London for several months to take a course in tropical medicine.

Rev. and Mrs. Haigh first went to Luebo where was the headquarters of the American Presbyterian Mission. Here they received much useful information as well as helpful suggestions from Doctor Morrison who was one of the first pioneers of the district. After spending some time at the Presbyterian Mission, Rev. and Mrs. Haigh started on an extended tour of investigation along the Kasai River. They investigated the field from September, 1911, until June, 1912.

Rev. and Mrs. Haigh did not feel that they wished to take the whole responsibility for the selection of a field and so they appealed to the Congo Inland Mission Board for help. The Mission sent Rev. A. J. Stevenson, who arrived on the field in April, 1912. Rev. Stevenson had received his training in the New York Christian Missionary Alliance training school. While there he received a call for mission work in the Congo. In April, 1896, he went to the field. He did missionary work in the Congo under the Christian Missionary Alliance Board until 1909 when he was compelled to return to America because of his health. About a year later he united with the Defenseless Mennonite Church and was ordained as a minister. After the appeal from Rev. Haigh and his offering of himself to the board because his heart was in the work in Africa, he was sent in 1912. Rev. Stevenson remained on the field until his death February 16, 1913. A month, however, before his death Rev. and Mrs. Haigh received new help by the coming of four new missionaries who arrived on the field January 24, 1913. These were Mr. and Mrs. A. Janzen, Miss Sarah Crocker and Mr. Walter Herr.

To Rev. and Mrs. Haigh must be given the credit for doing the pioneering in foreign mission work in the establishment of the first stations. Their travels through the jungles and forests for miles and miles by hammock and on foot in all kinds of weather conditions and with all kinds of dangers surrounding them demanded a great deal of courage, persistence and physical strength. Those of the church who did not go through these experiences will never be able to realize nor appreciate the sacrifices made by Rev. and Mrs. Haigh in the establishment of the Central Conference Foreign Mission Work.

Work was begun at the Djoka Punda station, now called Charlesville after Prince Charles of Belgium. This station is about thirteen miles inland from the west coast of Africa in the Belgian Congo and is at the end of navigation on the Kasai River. The territory allotted to the Mennonites for evangelization by the Continuation Committee of the All-Protestant Congo Conference is bounded on the west by the Kamtcha and Kuila Rivers, on the north and east by the Kassai and Luebe Rivers and on the south by the Portugese Congo line, making a territory approximately of two hundred by three hundred and fifty miles.

The people living in this particular territory are the Bantus. They are an intermingling of the Negro and the Hamitic races. The particular tribes in this group of people that have been given to the Congo Inland Mission are the Baluba-Lulua, the Bampende, the Bacoke and the Bashilele. Up to the present time the Congo Inland Mission has stations manned by white missionaries in only two of these tribes, the Baluba-Lulua and the Bampandi. The Djoka Punda and Kalamba Mukenge stations are in the Baluba-Lulua tribe. After a careful investigation Rev. Haigh suggested to the board the establishment of two stations; the one at Kalamba's village and one near the village of Djoka Punda. The Djoko Punda station was opened in 1912 by Rev. and Mrs. Haigh and Rev. Stevenson and the Kalamba station by Rev. Haigh during the latter

part of 1912. The government granted the sites selected by Rev. Haigh and the cablegram stating their acceptance was sent to the 1913 Church Conference at South Washington September 18th. These two stations formed the center for missionary work for the Congo Inland Mission Board for the first eight years.

The Djoka Punda station, now known as Charlesville, is located five degrees south of the equator and is about three-fourths of a mile from the Kassai River. It has become the transport station because it is the end of navigation of the Kassai River. One of the significant buildings on this station is the brick chapel, erected by Rev. L. B. Haigh in 1920. This building was made possible by money willed to Mrs. Haigh by her mother, a gift of five hundred dollars. The brick for the building was made by the natives; the iron for the roof was ordered from England. The church has a seating capacity of six hundred besides having a room in the back large enough for the holding of prayer meetings and special classes. This building was dedicated the first Sunday in August, 1921. The second station, Kalamba, is about one hundred and fifty miles south of Djoka Punda.

In 1920 the Field Committee, consisting of Rev. Sutton, Rev. Barkman, Rev. Janzen and Rev. William Kensinger, staked out two new stations in the Bampendi tribe, the one at Nyanga, one hundred and ten miles northwest of Kalamba and about ninety miles southwest of Djoka Punda, and the other, Mukedi, one hundred and ten miles northwest of Nyanga. The station of Nyanga was formally opened in April, 1921, while Mukedi was not opened until 1923. Thus the Congo Inland Mission Board has four stations manned by white missionaries in two out of the four tribes allotted to them. These stations represent different interests in foreign mission work. Djoka Punda is an industrial station and also a transport station. This station serves as the headquarters for the mission work in Africa. The Kalamba station serves as the center of the educational

work of the missions while Nyanga and Mukedi are particularly evangelistic centers.

As stated before, Rev. and Mrs. Haigh were the first missionaries sent by the Congo Inland Mission Board to the Belgian Congo. They returned on their first furlough in 1915 and returned again to the Belgian Congo in May, 1916. In 1920 they returned home on their second furlough and moved to Danvers, Illinois. Rev. Haigh became editor of the Christian Evangel and pastor of the Danvers Mennonite Church until the latter part of 1923 when they left for Havelock, North Carolina, where they at present reside. In the Congo Inland Mission Board meeting of September 9, 1926, a resolution was passed to invite Rev. and Mrs. Haigh to return to the Belgian Congo.

The nature of the foreign mission work in the first years can well be stated in a report given by Rev. Haigh for the Evangel concerning the year 1911 to 1913. He says: "We have temporary houses at each station for three missionaries, a chapel and a store house. At Djoka Punda we are at present building a permanent house which will house three missionaries very comfortably. At each station we have a department where logs are converted into lumber for building purposes by natives under our supervision. We are getting material ready for permanent buildings which will take the place of the small grass and mud houses which we are living in at present. The evangelistic work of the mission is very encouraging. At each station three evangelistic services are held each week and on Sunday afternoon a Sunday School. At Djoka Punda meetings are held four nights in a week for the purpose of giving Bible instruction. On Wednesday evening we have prayer meeting for the Christians." Rev. Haigh continually emphasized two things which are of vital importance in foreign missions today; first that there must be industrial, educational, social and religious work done; second, that we must get volunteers from our own congregations and these volunteers must be trained before they are sent to the field.

From 1911 to 1915 a number of the missionaries that were sent to the Belgian Congo under the Congo Inland Mission Board came from European countries such as Germany and Sweden. Most of the missionaries sent to the field thus far have come from Bible Institutes particularly Moody Institute and a number of them have come from other denominations. Very few volunteers have come from the Central Conference of Mennonites. This has been true because so few of her young people have trained themselves for work of this kind. The schools must always furnish the missionaries for the foreign field and the Central Conference of Mennonites will have volunteers as soon as their young people find their way to college and seminary where they receive the enlarged vision and also the proper training for foreign mission work. Some of the earliest missionaries on the field who are at present serving are: Rev. and Mrs. Omar L. Sutton, Rev. and Mrs. William G. Kensinger, Rev. and Mrs. Emil A. Sommer and Rev. and Mrs. J. P. Barkman. In 1923 a large number of missionaries were sent out raising the number of missionaries at home and on the field to twenty-one. There are at present thirty-one missionaries under the Congo Inland Mission Board, nineteen being on the field and twelve on furlough. A party of seven missionaries under the direction of Rev. J. P. Barkman sailed for the Belgian Congo October 30, 1926.

Through careful study and experience the mission work on the field has become more efficient both in its government machinery and also in its financial methods. The government for the field has become more democratic and the financial system more active and economical. Dr. Hollenback, one of the members of the Phelps-Stokes Foundation, who investigated the Mennonite Mission work, particularly the headquarters at Djoka Punda said: "The Mennonite Mission with headquarters at Djoka Punda is working on sound principles and if the Mennonites of America will cooperate, this station, the strategic point at the end of navigation on the Kassai, will prove the gateway to a large missionary endeavor second to none."

Some one has said that the boys and girls of Africa need Jesus, churches, schools, learn how to work, learn how to establish Christian homes and how to promote the proper kind of civilization. This is the program that the missionaries on the field are attempting to carry out. Perhaps the best idea can be had of the nature of the African work by the description of the work given by Rev. William Kensinger who has lately returned from the field. He says: "We are working among two of the four large tribes of the Bantu people for which we have made ourselves responsible. There are four main stations manned by white missionaries who in turn have trained approximately sixty native evangelists and teachers who are manning as many out-stations. There are two lines of missionary endeavor which complete a well rounded out work among the natives of Congo land. First, the building of main stations for the purpose of training native Christian workers as evangelists and teachers. Second, the building of outstations where these evangelists are sent to teach and preach. The work on a main station is divided into six departments: evangelistic, educational, medical, industrial, agricultural and itinerating." This type of work which has been outlined by Rev. Kensinger is the kind of work that our missionaries are doing in the Congo.

It is fitting to close this discussion with the stating of the conditions at present as was given by Rev. Lester Bixel, a missionary on the field, in a letter written September 23, 1926, to the treasurer of the Congo Inland Mission Board. He says that the mission work is more difficult than it was a few years ago because in the last few years a civilization without Christianity has come in with full force. The natives who had been living in their old customs for years are plunged into a new environment. They are perplexed. The traders, the diamond men, priests and the missionaries have come in simultaneously and with different standards of morals and it becomes perplexing to the natives. On the other hand the commercial spirit which the natives have imbibed makes them indifferent to the gospel. These things, Rev. Bixel says, are a challenge to the church

at home. He closes his letter with a plea for men and women with a thorough training who can analyze these problems and work towards their solution.

The Congo Inland Mission Board is making special efforts to meet these problems through bringing proper information to the churches. The treasurer, Rev. I. R. Detweiler, with his assistant, Rev. William Kensinger, is issuing a Mission Monthly which is sent to all congregations for the purpose of disseminating missionary information and to encourage the church to more definite and systematic missionary giving. The need of the field is money and trained workers and the need in the home church is vision and consecration.

OLD PEOPLE'S HOME.

Another cooperative activity of the Central Conference Mennonite Church is the Old People's Home at Meadows, Illinois. This institution is supported by the Central Conference and the Defenseless Conference of Mennonites. An Old People's Home was the vision of a number of the leaders in both Conferences. In the 1917 church conference held at Hopedale, Illinois, a committee of three was appointed to confer with the Defenseless Brethren on the Old People's Home. The committee was composed of Rev. John Gingerich, Rev. Emanuel Troyer and Rev. Andrew Vercler. Rev. Peter Schantz, although not one of the committee, urged the building of an Old People's Home. Each one of the Conferences felt the project was too large for one Conference.

The first definite step was taken when the following representative men of each Conference formed an organization known as the Mennonite Old People's Home, incorporated June 6, 1919: D. N. Claudon, S. E. Bachman, Daniel Augustin, Joseph Rich and Moses Roth. The town of Meadows was chosen by this committee as the location for the home. A location was purchased in the central part of the village with twenty acres of land, a house and barn for the sum of ten

thousand dollars. An attempt was made at first to unite with the Old Mennonites in the building of an Old People's Home at Eureka, Illinois, but when they found that this was fruitless they decided to build.

In the spring of 1922 the building of the home was begun. The plan of the building was for an administration building, the first floor to be used for the office and reception room. The second floor to be used for living apartments of the superintendent and matron. There was to be a one-story wing on both the east and west side with an annex to the rear for the kitchen and dining room and was to be connected with the administration building with a corridor. Up to the present time the administration building and the annex and the east wing has been built. The building will accommodate besides the superintendent and family about twenty persons. All the rooms have been occupied since the erection of the building. The completed building would house about forty people.

The Old People's Home was dedicated on Sunday, May 20, 1923. There were about two thousand people present. Rev. J. H. King had charge of the dedicatory services. An all-day meeting was arranged for in connection with the dedication. Mr. and Mrs. Klaussen who had charge of the Orphans Home at Flanagan, Illinois, were chosen as superintendent and matron of the home. They continued their services at the home until January 1, 1925, when Rev. G. I. Gundy took charge of the work. The motto of the institution is well stated in the Scripture verse, Psalms 71:9 "Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth." The institution meets a long felt need in the two Conferences that it represents.

The superintendent not only looks after the physical needs of the aged but also their spiritual needs. Prayer meetings are held every Thursday evening and religious services on Sunday afternoon. The present need of the institution is the payment of the debt and also raising sufficient funds to complete the building.

CHAPTER XIX.

COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES CONTINUED.

HOSPITAL.

The next cooperative activity to be undertaken by the Conference was the establishment of a hospital. For a number of years past a conviction had grown upon the minds of some of the Conference leaders that our Mennonite people should launch out in hospital work. In fact as early as 1893 there were a few Mennonites who were then interested in the establishment of such an institution. In May of this year the Brokaw Hospital was organized to be controlled by Protestant people. About five thousand dollars was collected for the project but nothing else was done. In 1895 the physicians of Bloomington and Normal organized and secured an option on the location where the Brokaw hospital now stands. The organization formed in 1893 now joined them and gave them their money.

A building was erected this same year. In 1896 the hospital opened and was called the Deaconess Memorial Hospital. From the very beginning the hospital was managed by Mennonite deaconess nurses under the leadership of Rev. John A. Sprunger. It remained under their supervision until August, 1907. There were a few Mennonite leaders in our Conference who were ready to continue the work but it seemed the time was not yet ripe for the support of the church and so the Brokaw Hospital was given over to the Methodist Episcopal Deaconess Society of Chicago. During the years 1897-1917 the conviction concerning the hospital seemed to grow and particularly was the need for a hospital felt when foreign mission work was established by the Conference in 1909. Already in the 1908 church conference Rev. Andrew Vercler discussed the subject of the need of trained nurses.

The real agitation for a hospital began in 1918 when the matter was discussed at various religious gatherings. The

phase of hospital work which appealed particularly to the Conference leaders was the missionary endeavor. The motive that impelled them was the desire to imitate the Master in His ministry of healing. The church leaders believed that we ought not only teach and preach but also do something for those that are in need physically. On the other hand they were also interested in the training of nurses so that they might be able to supply the foreign field with trained nurses. The men who were particularly interested in this project were Rev. Peter Schantz, and Rev. Emanuel Troyer.

In the 1917 conference held at Hopedale, Illinois, September 5th-7th, Rev. Troyer urged action on hospital work. A committee was then appointed to report to the next conference. Rev. Troyer, Rev. Schantz and Sam Stuckey were appointed on this committee. From 1917 to the conference of 1918 various talks were given throughout the churches, making an appeal for hospital work. In the 1918 conference held at North Danvers, August 27th-29th, Rev. Troyer reported the work of the hospital committee for the past year. The delegates decided to retain the same committee and to ask them to investigate still further.

The first definite step in organization was taken January 23, 1919, when the Mennonite Sanitarium Association was organized. The association was incorporated January 24, 1919. The purpose of the association was to conduct a sanitarium, hospital and training school at Bloomington, Illinois, not for profit, but to help all people in sickness and distress and to further the highest and most progressive ideas of the Mennonite Church. The reasons given for locating it in Bloomington were that they would be enabled to secure the services of a staff of skilled and reliable physicians and surgeons who had an established reputation. Second, that this city is centrally located and is a moral, Christian town and an educational center. The city of Bloomington, especially the Association of Commerce gave the Mennonite Sanitarium Association a very cordial welcome.

The first directors chosen for the sanitarium were Rev. Emanuel Troyer who is still the president, Rev. Benjamin Rupp who was elected superintendent and is still serving, Rev. Allen Miller, Rev. Joseph H. King and Rev. John Kinsinger. These men are all serving on the present board of directors. The association is formed of delegates selected from the different congregations. The hospital is a cooperative effort, representatives from the Defenseless Mennonites and Old Mennonites serving on the board.

The first work of the association was the selection of a suitable location for the hospital. A property was purchased on North Main Street which was called the Harber property and was a dwelling house. This was remodeled and fitted for hospital use. The first patients were received May 1, 1919. The board also purchased a large additional lot adjoining the Harber property on the south. This lot was to serve as the location for the new hospital which was to be built. Twelve rooms of the hospital were soon filled and three capable nurses began their work.

While the board of directors was planning for the new hospital they learned that the Kelso Sanitarium, located on North Main Street, was available. The Kelso Hospital had been founded by Dr. Kelso in 1893. It was a fully equipped hospital with forty nurses in training. He offered the buildings and entire equipment for seventy-five thousand dollars. The board of directors called a meeting of the association January 19, 1920. The association voted unanimously to accept the proposition of Dr. Kelso. Possession was to be given May 1, 1920. A new building had been erected in 1918. The institution had about sixty rooms. In June, 1920, the building was properly dedicated in the presence of a large audience. The Harber property served as a nurses' home until a few years ago when a home was bought just east of the hospital.

As stated before the chief interest of the church was two-fold; to care for the sick and also to train Christian nurses

and doctors for service in the home and foreign field. A nurses' training school has been conducted in connection with the Kelso Sanitarium. This school was taken over by the church and placed on an accredited basis. The first nurses' class graduated in April, 1922. In 1925 the course was extended to three years. There are at present about thirty nurses in training. The hospital has a capacity of forty-five beds. The most pressing need at present in relation to hospital work is a new building.

EDUCATION.

The educational movement in the Mennonite Church did not begin as early as mission work as far as higher education is concerned. The Central Conference Mennonite Church was always interested that the children should receive an elementary education. The early settlers established their own private schools for the purpose of educating the children. There are several reasons why higher education did not begin earlier among the Central Conference Mennonites. In the first place the Amish have been more conservative in relation to education than the Mennonites. In the second place because of the fact that they lived in communities where farming was done on an extensive scale they felt they needed their boys and girls as soon as they were old enough to help on the farm.

It was the missionary movement in the church which first brought the need of higher education to the minds of the church leaders. The Central Conference Mennonite Church, as all other Mennonite groups, discovered that she must get her missionaries from some training school; be it a Bible school or seminary. Practically all the missionaries that were sent to Africa received their training at the Moody Bible Institute. Most of these were also not members of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. The Church began to see that she must send her young people to high school, college and seminary if she would have future missionaries. This was the primary reason

for the interest of the Central Conference in educational institutions.

BLUFFTON COLLEGE.

The first educational institution in which the Central Conference of Mennonites became interested was Bluffton College. This institution was founded in 1900 by the General Conference of Mennonites. It was owned and governed by the Middle District Conference and was called Central Mennonite College. The president, Dr. S. K. Mosiman, visited the Central Conference Mennonite Churches in the interests of the college as early as 1909 and 1910. These visits meant much in the way of encouragement to the young people to attend the institution, and also in creating interest among the Conference leaders.

During these same years there was considerable discussion among the leaders of the different groups of Mennonites in regard to a cooperative effort in Mennonite education.

Up to 1909 the Mennonite Colleges that were established interested only one group of Mennonites and very little effort was made to interest Mennonites of other groups. Perhaps one of the first steps in suggesting the idea of cooperation was a letter sent by Prof. N. E. Byers, then president of Goshen College, on June 3, 1909, to the heads of all Mennonite schools and colleges, stating that Goshen was offering full college course for the A. B. degree and asked their cooperation in interesting the graduates of their schools who desired to complete a full college course. There was no response to this letter by any of the schools.

The first step that finally resulted in cooperation was made by Pres. N. E. Byers to Pres. J. W. Kliewer of Bethel College in November of 1912. He suggested in this letter that the next step in the development of higher education for Mennonites should be taken by the cooperation of several branches of the church. A few weeks later Pres. J. W. Kliewer and Pres. S. K. Mosiman met in Chicago and after discuss-

ing the matter of educational cooperation they asked Pres. Byers to meet with them. The three presidents of the three Mennonite Colleges with Rev. A. S. Shelly of the Eastern District of the General Conference met at the LaSalle Hotel, in Chicago in December, 1912. Two important decisions were made at this meeting: First, that any advanced work in education in the Mennonite church could best be accomplished by cooperation of a number of Mennonite groups; Second, that if sufficient interest in such a movement should manifest itself, that a meeting should be called at some central place to consider the possibility of such an undertaking.

It was afterwards discovered that a number from several of the Mennonite groups were interested and expressed their willingness to attend a meeting to discuss a union school movement. This meeting was held at Warsaw, Indiana, on May 29, 1913. There were twenty-four interested persons present at this meeting, representing five groups of Mennonites. Rev. Benjamin Esch, Rev. A. B. Rutt and John Ropp were present from the Central Conference of Mennonites.

The most important resolution passed at this meeting was that it is the sense of this meeting that an institution be established representing the various branches of the Church giving under-graduate and graduate work of a standard college and theological and Biblical work of a standard seminary. At this same meeting a Board of fifteen men was named, whose duty it should be to take the necessary steps to establish the proposed institution. Rev. J. H. King, Rev. Emanuel Troyer and Rev. A. B. Rutt were members of the Board from Central Conference.

This Board met June 24, 1913, at the Mennonite Home Chapel in Chicago. At this meeting it was decided that the proposed school should be established in connection with Central Mennonite College at Bluffton Ohio.[1] The name adopted

1. Part of the material for this history of Bluffton College was obtained from "The Story of Bluffton College", edited by C. Henry Smith and E. J. Hirschler.

for the new school was Bluffton College and Mennonite Seminary. The school opened on September 17, 1913, with over a hundred students. Dr. Mosiman was President of the institution and Prof. N. E. Byers, Dean.

From the beginning of this institution there were a number of men in our Conference who were vitally interested. March 10, 1914, the ministers of the Conference met at Bloomington, Illinois, and passed a resolution endorsing the individuals of our Conference who were taking an active part in the work of the school. Another individual, a member of the Central Conference of Mennonites, who should be mentioned here as a firm supporter of Bluffton College was John Ropp of Bloomington, Illinois. Mr. and Mrs. Ropp and Mrs. Ropp's mother, Mrs. Mary Rupp, have given more to the college in annuities and gifts than any other person. They have given approximately $180,000. By 1915 the Conference officially recognized Bluffton College as its school. In the 1916 campaign of the College for the raising of $200,000 endowment the Central Conference Mennonite Church decided to raise $30,000 of this amount. Prof. Huffman of the college went through the churches soliciting the money. In the conference of 1924 at Congerville, Ill., the Conference again passed a resolution approving the present campaign of the college for raising $500,000. The Conference at present supports the college with money and students. It is the only conference thus far that has consistently elected all of its members to the Board.

WITMARSUM SEMINARY.

In the establishment of the new school by the various branches of Mennonites, it was noted that the name Bluffton College and Mennonite Seminary was given to the new institution. This suggested the idea that the Seminary should have a large place in this new united educational movement of the Mennonites. In fact the seminary was considered the most important by many of the church leaders because the great

need of an educational institution was to train missionaries, ministers and other Christian workers.

From 1913 to 1920 the college and seminary were under one board. The seminary was a department of the college. After seven years of experience as a part of the college a number of the Mennonite Church leaders felt that the institution was too weak in teaching force and equipment to attract any considerable number of graduates of other colleges.

The Mennonite Seminary remained a department of the college until 1921 when Witmarsum Theological Seminary was established. During this time the seminary had two professors and after 1917 three. The A. M. and B. D. degrees were granted to several students.

The reasons for the organizing of the seminary as a distinct institution is well stated in the Story of Bluffton College. It states as follows: First, some of the cooperating bodies in the union effort of Bluffton College felt the need of more elementary courses in the Seminary to provide for their young people who did not have the educational preparation to enter the regular courses offered by the Mennonite Seminary. To meet this demand would require an expansion of the Seminary faculty by adding two more men to the teaching force. But the attendance and prospects for increased attendance did not seem to justify the increase. Second, it was felt that the Seminary would be in a better position to serve its whole constituency, especially the graduates of the five degree-granting Mennonite colleges in the United States, if it were an independent institution with its own corporate organization, officers and faculty. The persistence of these two needs, and the attempt to meet them, finally culminated in the organization of the Witmarsum Theological Seminary.[1] On the other hand there was also an agitation among the educational leaders of the Old Conference for the establishment of a Bible School and Seminary. To meet this need was also one of the reasons for the establishment of the Seminary.

1. Smith and Hirschler, Story of Bluffton College. p. 145.

At the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Bluffton College, January 27, 28, 1921, the matter of the expansion of the work of the Seminary was considered. A committee of five was appointed to bring in a report to the Board of Trustees. Rev. Emanuel Troyer was a member of this committee. The report of this committee provided that the Mennonite Seminary be placed in charge of a committee of five men. Rev. Troyer again served on this committee. After several meetings of this committee the Seminary was finally organized and incorporated on July 6, 1921.

The Central Conference Mennonite Church has aided very materially in the financing of the institution. Up to July 6, 1921, Rev. Troyer had solicited $135.00 among friends in Central Illinois. He also invited Prof. Whitmer to visit the churches in Central Illinois and explain the need and plans of such an institution as Witmarsum Theological Seminary. The Central Conference also gave considerable amount for the first year's operating expenses. In the conference of 1922 held at Meadows, Illinois, a resolution was passed that the Conference support one chair at the Seminary, the amount being $2000. The Conference is supporting this chair at the present time.

The Seminary with only a few years of service as an independent institution has already furnished the Mennonite Church a number of trained ministers and missionaries who are a credit to the institution. The present needs of the institution are one hundred thousand dollars for building needs and two hundred thousand dollars for endowment to put the institution on a financial basis.

RELIEF WORK.

Another cooperative effort of the Central Conference Mennonite Church was Relief Work. During the European War the Friends, or Quakers of England asked permission of the government to send their young men into relief work because they could not conscientiously send them to the battle field.

This permission was granted and when the United States entered the war the same was granted to the American Friends.

The Mennonites also being non-resistant made application to the Friends to do relief work under their organization. The Central Conference of Mennonites decided in the conference of 1917, held at Hopedale, Illinois, to join with about six other Mennonite groups in carrying on War Relief Work in France. A committee on Relief Work was appointed January 3, 1918, consisting of Rev. Valentine Strubhar, Rev. Allen Miller and Rev. Aaron Augspurger.

After the close of the war the Conference decided to participate in permanent relief work. Thus far the relief work has been done in Russia, Germany and the Near East. From 1918 to 1922 the Conference raised $15,000 for relief work. From the time the Conference entered relief work to the present time she has given through congregations and by individuals over $270,000. She also has a representative on the permanent Central Relief Committee. This is a very feasible way to apply the positive doctrine of love and good will.

ALL-MENNONITE CONVENTION.

The Central Conference Mennonite Church has been vitally interested from the beginning of its history in the union of the Mennonite groups. As stated before the Christian Evangel, the official organ of the Conference, was started with the hopes that it might become an All-Mennonite paper. At a meeting of the ministers held at Peoria, Illinois, October 17, 1917, a committee was appointed to attempt to form an All-Mennonite Christian Endeavor and Sunday School Union. Rev. Emanuel Troyer, Rev. Lee Lantz and Rev. Ben Esch were appointed on the committee.

So also in 1910 Rev. Aaron Augspurger was the first one to endorse the suggestions of Rev. I. A. Sommer for a discussion of the question of Union. On May 5, 1910, Rev. Sommer, then editor of The Mennonite, the official organ of the

General Conference of Mennonites, published an editorial under the title, "In What Fundamentals do Mennonites Agree?". In his editorial he suggested that a conference should be held of the leaders of all the Mennonite branches and invited a discussion of the subject in the church papers. There was opposition from only one source. Rev. John Horsch, an Old Mennonite, published an article in the Gospel Herald, giving seven reasons why they could not participate in a general conference with other Mennonite groups. This seemed to check the agitation somewhat until August 18, 1910, when President N. E Byers of Goshen College revived the discussion and proposed a plan for the starting of an All-Mennonite Conference. He suggested that the editor of The Mennonite nominate a committee, consisting of one representative from each group of Mennonites to prepare a program, select a time and place of meeting. Rev. Valentine Strubhar was the representative from the Central Conference of Mennonites.

The first All-Mennonite Convention was held at Berne, Indiana, August 19-20, 1913. Fourteen of the Central Conference Mennonite people were present. The Conference has been represented very well at all the conventions. These All-Mennonite Conventions have been held every three years, the last one having been held at Nappanee, Indiana, September 2 and 3, 1925. At this convention it was decided to hold the meetings every two years. Definite steps were taken at the last convention for the appointment of a committee to unite our publication and missionary activities. The Central Conference Mennonite Church made provision for a representative on this committee at their 1926 annual meeting at Washington, Illinois.

YOUNG PEOPLES RETREAT

The most recent cooperative activity in which the Central Conference has entered is the Young Peoples Retreat. The first retreat was held in 1925 at Bluffton, Ohio. The Central Con-

ference sent eight young people to the retreat and also had a representative on the Retreat Committee. The present representative is Gerald Stahley of Danvers, Illinois. The second retreat was held in 1926. The Conference has given its support in finances and moral endeavor to this movement which is in its infancy.

CHAPTER XX.

DOCTRINES OF THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE MENNONITE CHURCH.

A history of the doctrines of the Central Conference Mennonite Church involves somewhat a history of the doctrines of the Christian Church. It would be necessary to trace the doctrines back through the history of the Amish, the Mennonites, the Anabaptists and then to the Reformation in general.

At the close of the Reformation there was much in doctrine that the Catholics and Protestants had in common. They all believed in the Trinity, in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, in the sacredness of the Jewish Scriptures and of the New Testament, in the fall of man and his redemption through the sacrifice of the cross and in a future life of rewards and punishments. Christian virtues continued to be inculcated by Catholics as well as Protestants.

On the other hand there were doctrines which were held by all Protestants which distinguished them from Catholicism. They denied the claim of the Pope of Rome and rejected his government and jurisdiction. They also rejected such doctrines of the Catholic Church as purgatory, indulgences, invocation of saints, veneration of relics and the modification of the sacramental system. They also insisted upon the right of the individual to interpret the Bible and to save himself without the mediation of the priest. The Protestant emphasized the authority of the Bible while the Catholic the authority of the Church.

There were also many divisions of Protestantism as can be seen in the number of Protestant divisions today. Most of Protestantism, however, can be classified under four heads; Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism and Anabaptism. The doctrines of the Central Conference Mennonite Church grow out of Anabaptism.

The distinguishing marks of Anabaptism as it related to

Protestantism were:—1. The complete separation of the Church and State. 2. Adult baptism for believers only. 3. The Bible as the only guide of faith and practice. 4. The doctrine of non-resistance. The early Mennonites under the leadership of Menno Simon accepted these principles as fundamental in their doctrines. It may be said, then, that the Central Conference Mennonite Church believes in those doctrines that were held in common at the time of the Reformation by Protestants and Catholics as stated above and that they also hold with all Protestants the doctrines which distinguish them from Catholicism. They also hold the essential principles of Anabaptism. Since the essential principles of Mennonitism are individualism, and literal interpretation of the Bible it cannot be said that the Mennonites of Europe and America ever formulated any philosophical confession of faith. The Amish, however, from whom this conference originated, accepted the confession of faith consisting of eighteen articles drawn up by the Conference of Mennonites held at Dortrecht, Holland, April 21, 1632. This confession of faith was signed by fifty-one representatives from Mennonite congregations in Holland and Northwestern Germany. In 1660 it was accepted by the churches of Alsace and the Palatinate. It became the accepted confession of faith for the early Mennonite church in America.

The Central Cenference Mennonite Church accepted this confession of faith with a few revisions at the time of its organization in 1908. Since the question is often asked by those of other religious affiliations what the creed is of this Conference, the writer will insert here brief statements of the confession of faith. 1. There is one Eternal Almighty, and Incomprehensible God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost who is the Creator of all things and particularly created man and woman in His own image. 2. Adam and Eve did not remain long in the happy state in which they were created but seduced by the serpent and envy of the devil disobeyed God and brought sin and death into the world. 3. Jesus Christ, the Son of God

foreordained to the purpose of redemption before the foundation of the world became the Redeemer of the fallen race. 4. When the fulness of time came, the promised Messiah, Redeemer and Saviour came into the world in the form of flesh, born of the Virgin Mary, lived, was crucified, buried, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven from whence He will come again to judge the living and the dead. How the word became flesh we content ourselves with the description given us by the faithful evangelist. 5. Christ, before His ascension established and instituted the New Testament, which contains the whole will of His Father and which is sufficient to the salvation of those who are obedient. 6. Man is by nature corrupt and it is only through faith in Jesus Christ, the new birth and change of life that he can have the promise of salvation, receive pardon and become sanctified, justified and a child of God. 7. Penitent believers, who through faith, the new birth and renewal of the Holy Ghost, have become united with God are baptized with water in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost to the burying of their sins and to become incorporated in the communion of saints. 8. The church consists of those who have repented and rightly believe and are rightly baptised. These are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood and holy nation. They shall be known by their love, Godly conversation, pure walk and practice. 9. The church needs officers and so Christ before His departure, and His apostles provided the church with faithful ministers, apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. 10. The Lord's Supper is observed in commemoration of the suffering and death of Christ. 11. Jesus instituted the washing of the saints' feet and afterwards taught believers to observe it as a sign of the washing of the soul in the blood of Christ. 12. Marriage should be between two believers, so those to be united in matrimony should have expressed their faith in Christ as their Saviour and united with the church by baptism or confession of faith. The divorce is contrary to the will of God. No brother or sister shall retain membership in the church who will marry

again after having been divorced or who will marry a divorced person. 13. Civil Government is instituted of God for the punishment of the wicked, the protection of the pious and for the purpose of governing the world. Christians should be subject and obedient to the government in all things that do not militate against the will of God and to pray for their rulers and pay the required taxes. 14. Revenge and resistance is forbidden by Christ to all His disciples. So the Christian should refrain form the use of the sword or to take revenge in any form. He should overcome evil with good. 15. All oaths, high and low, are forbidden the followers of Christ. The Christian's confirmation is to be yea and nay. 16. The church has the right of excommunication as a separation or spiritual punishment for the amendment of the offender. 17. The church believes that those who are excommunicated should be shunned and avoided by the members of the church, whether it be in eating or drinking or other such like social matters in order that they may be ashamed and be induced to amend their ways. They shall not, however, be treated as enemies but exhorted as brethren. 18. The hope of the church is centered in the personal return of Jesus Christ, who will Himself return in like manner as he ascended. 19. The principle of secrecy is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus Christ and the apostles. Therefore the fellowship of the lodge is contrary to Scripture. "These are the chief articles of our general Christian Faith, which we everywhere teach in our congregations and families, and according to which we profess to live; and which, according to our convictions, contain the true Christian Faith, which the apostles in their time believed and taught; yea, which they testified to by their lives and confirmed by their deaths; in which we will also according to our faith, gladly abide, live and die, that at last, together with the apostles and all the pious we may obtain the salvation of our souls through the grace of God".[1]

1. Articles of Faith and The Constitution of the Central Conference Mennonite Church.

In the constitution of the Central Conference of Mennonites the purpose of the Conference is stated as follows: The endeavor of this Conference shall be to unite all congregations of like faith. The purpose of this union shall be with God's gracious help to establish and strengthen by mutual instruction and admonition from the word of God, to carry on the work of evangelism, to spread and establish the Kingdom of God and to enter into the work of home and foreign missions. In article three the principle of the Conference is stated as follows: "quotation II Tim. 3:16-17". This Conference shall recognize God's Word as final authority in all matters of church government and requires of those congregations which would unite with it that they stand upon a Scriptural confession of faith and that they adhere to the doctrines accepted by the Conference. Article five, section four, states: If any congregation of the Conference shall habitually fail to support the Conference financially and spiritually and after being properly dealt with shall still refuse, it shall be excluded from having a voice in the Conference.

The Central Conference Mennonite Church believes in congregational form of church government. The annual conferences that are held are for the purpose of unifying the work of the Conference, to give encouragement to the various congregations and to report on work done throughout the year. The Conference is not a legislative body. It is representative in its organization. The delegate body is composed of lay delegates and ministers. The lay delegates may be men or women. Article six of the constitution provides that each congregation shall have a right to be represented at the conference by one vote for every thirty communicant members or fractional part of that number. All ministers are delegates.

The theology of the Central Conference Mennonite Church is conservative. Much emphasis is placed on the literal interpretation of the Bible. The church has accepted very largely the doctrines as they are in the Dortrecht confession. The theology of the church has been largely Biblical. The leaders

of the church have never spent much time or effort in any philosophical interpretation of the doctrines they hold. The doctrines are supported with numerous Scripture references and are largely literal in their interpretation. The church has spent considerable time in an emphasis on the spirit of unity, good will and right living. There are various practices that the church had in its early history which have been discarded.

It is fitting to conclude this chapter on doctrines with the statement which Dr. Smith gives in relation to all Mennonites. "Although Mennonites have always lived a simple and somewhat secluded life, they were noted for their liberal endowment of the fundamental virtues of life. They were industrious, sober, honest, philanthropic, law-abiding and religious. Today they are everywhere well-to-do and are among the most peaceful and generally prosperous people in their respective communities."[2]

2. Smith, C. Henry. The Mennonites. p. 332.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FUTURE OF THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE MENNONITE CHURCH.

Although this concluding chapter is called the future of the church, the author does not intend to predict or prophesy what the future shall be except as we might interpret it from the light of the past. In a study of the history of the Central Conference Mennonite Church and its historical background, the question naturally arises, Has this group made any contribution to the world and has it any to make for the future?

Authorities in the field of Anabaptist and Mennonite history claim that the Anabaptists and Mennonites have not been given sufficient credit for the contribution they have made in the past. Dr. Newman, in his address at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, in the spring of 1925, said, "The Anabaptist movement was to the Christian religion, then so corrupted by priestcraft and patronage, what the American Revolution was in politics. It recalled the first principles of the doctrines of Christ, it cleared the air and purged the vision, and made some hoary institutions, including kingcraft, priestcraft very unsafe. The Anabaptists were the forerunners of the American Republic, where conscience is free. They denounced that union of priest and magistrate, which brings Christ to the cross, and lets Barabbas go free. They shook down the dogma of close corporationism in the clergy. They reassured the rights of the people. They made the congregation supreme. They dug the grave in which the divine right of a particular form of church organization lies side by side with the divine right of kings."

Dr. Jones, in his discussion of the contribution of the Anabaptists, says, "Many of their ideas caught hold and lived on even where no Anabaptist organization existed, and out of the seed-truths, which no forces of Church or State could annihi-

late, there sprang, in the course of time, many important religious bodies—Baptist Societies and Mennonites. Many social and spiritual results followed, not the least of which is the basic and fundamental position of religion in relation to government in the United States, the general respect for the rights of conscience, and the prevailing recognition that religion is a matter to be settled between the individual soul and God. These free privileges were purchased at a great cost—the lives of more than thirty thousand martyrs—and they are now enjoyed by multitudes who have no consciousness that those who first proclaimed the ideals died for them."[1]

The Central Conference Mennonite Church holding the same religious teachings as the Anabaptist and other Mennonites has shared in the contribution stated above. There are two outstanding contributions made by this group; first, that made by their own lives, and second, the religious principles they have held.

The writer, in this research, has found many expressions of commendation given to these peoples by non-Mennonites. In 1872, when the Russian Mennonites came to McLean County, one of the leading citizens of Danvers, Illinois, said, "If these Russian Mennonites are the same kind of people as the Amish living here, we welcome them into our community." Another citizen said concerning the Amish, "They are a sober and industrious people." Again, concerning the Early Amish settlers it was said, "These people possess the perseverance and sterling integrity that makes good citizens." As a rule they have lived quiet, simple and unassuming lives. Being an agricultural people, they have selected some of the very best farming lands and have become the most prosperous farmers. Very few of them are found in prisons or have been accused of being law breakers.

The greatest contribution, however, has been the preserving of the great principle of peace. The Anabaptists and Men-

1. Jones, The Church's Debt to Heretics. p. 237.

nonites have held this principle for four hundred years in spite of persecution. The statement of Dr. M'Glothlin was a significant prophecy: "The military basis of society in the sixteenth century made such advocates of peace appear dangerous to national existence. But this cause of bitter denunciation and persecution may yet become their crown of glory as the world swings into the era of universal peace.[2] This has become vital today in the fact that the peace movement is spreading very rapidly. The Central Conference Mennonite Church has had a part in this ushering in of world peace.

Since the future of any institution or group of people is very largely dependent on its past history, it is of interest here to note the achievements of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. This group of people, although only three thousand in number, are supporting three mission stations in the Home Field and eight missionaries in the Congo-Belge in Africa. Besides this they are supporting in cooperation with the Defenseless Mennonites an Old People's Home, and with a few other Mennonite groups, a hospital, college and seminary. They also support the various activities within the group. Within the last year nearly fifteen thousand dollars was raised for foreign missions and over six thousand dollars for home missions. The older ministers of the Conference, who were young men in the ministry at the birth of the Conference, have served the Church faithfully without any remuneration except the joy that comes from Christian service and the satisfaction that they were doing God's will. The Conference is loaded very heavily with institutional work for the size of its constituency.

The history of the Conference for the pupose of interpreting its present condition might be divided into three periods. The first period would extend from 1899, when the first ministerial meeting was held, to 1908 when the Conference was organized. During this period we find the development of

2. Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. I, Anabaptism. Dr. W. J. M. Glothlin.

unity among the congregations and also the beginning of a number of activities. New congregations were forming and new methods of Church and Sunday School work were being introduced. The second period extends from 1908 to the end of the World War. This period marks a time of great prosperity economically among the members of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. It also marks the time of progress in relation to Church work. The Church is expanding into other states. Various institutions are being established. The work of cooperation begins in relation to other Mennonite groups. These rapid strides of progress created a number of problems which the Church faces today. The conditions of the present have been brought about by the past. The third period extends from the World War to the present. This is the period in which the leaders have been wrestling with the problems created in the other two periods.

Some of the outstanding problems that are facing the Central Conference Mennonite Church today are: Leadership, education, finances, cooperation and efficiency in work. The problem of finances in the Church does not consist so much in the producing of enough wealth to finance the institutions and activities of the Church as it does in the obtaining of this wealth for necessary purposes. The Church, from year to year, needs more money rather than less for the greatest efficiency of its work. The problem briefly stated is: How to get the laity to willingly give the needed amount. The methods used in the past are no more adequate to raise the amount of money that needs to be raised for the support of the work. On the other hand, since there are today so many opportunities for spending money, much of the money that should be given to the Church is often spent selfishly. Jesus' teachings concerning wealth are as true today as they were when He taught them. The rich man becoming absorbed in his own wealth and losing his vision of the needs of the world is illustrated again and again in the church.

The problem of leadership is a vital one. The present

day church member faces tremendous problems which were never dreamed of by his forefathers. It was easy to maintain church attendance when people had very few opportunities of seeing each other except at the Sunday morning church service. Today the modern church member has the newspaper, hard roads, radio, home comforts and modern conveniences, all of which have their effect upon his interest in the church, both in giving and in church attendance. There must be a type of leadership which is able to cope with these situations. The young people are attending high school and college which also brings a challenge to the minister today.

The purpose of enumerating these problems is to get the proper perspective in relation to the future of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. Rev. Aaron Augspurger, in the August Evangel of 1912, spoke prophetically when he said in essence that because of the financial prosperity of the church and the changing conditions of life the future demands that we meet the situation if the Conference expects to live and thrive. His solution to the problem lay in two suggestions; first: That there be a strong, well trained leadership for which the churches should now provide. Second: That there should be a great deal of attention given to teaching and indoctrinating if the church expects to maintain its identity.

The great need for the Central Conference Mennonite Church for today and the future is consecrated, trained leadership. This applies to the ministry and the leaders in the church activities of the Conference. This means that the young people of the various congregations should be urged to receive high school and college training. Trained men are needed in the mission field, home and foreign, and in our various institutions, as leaders of our Sunday School and Christian Endeavor work and pastors of our churches. It is a sad fact that in the past very few young people of this Conference have chosen as their life work the foreign field or the ministry. This has been largely due to the fact that they have not received training which brings to them the challenge of these fields. The sacrifice has

seemed too large. The church needs to encourage every activity such as our institutes and college and seminary, which are for the purpose of training our youth.

Another need of the hour in this Conference is the teaching of stewardship. Ministers must be clear and definite in their teaching the congregations Jesus' teachings concerning wealth. The day has come when we can neither by begging nor compulsion get enough money to properly support church work. It must come by education along the line of stewardship.

With the emphasis upon trained leadership and the stewardship of life will come the solution of the next problem, efficiency in work. There must be specialists in our various fields of endeavor such as Sunday School and Christian Endeavor who will be able to lead the rest in the solution of various problems in the above mentioned fields.

Another serious problem that must be solved in the future is the fact that the constituency is small and therefore is not able to carry on successfully all the lines of endeavor that should be undertaken by the Christian Church. In the humble opinion of the writer the future success of the Central Conference Mennonite Church lies in the closest cooperation with other Mennonite groups. This does not mean necessarily absorption by any other group but the uniting of various activities such as missionary and publication work under one united board. The Central Conference Mennonite Church has always stood for cooperation and by the continuing of this effort can she make a valuable contribution to Mennonitism in America. The Central Conference Mennonite Church has a Message for the world. Now as never before are her principles of the regenerated life, simplicity, good will and peace needed by the world. May she not be disobedient to her heavenly vision but may she accept the challenge as it comes to her in this present age.

CHAPTER XXII

BIOGRAPHIES OF THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE MENNONITE MINISTERS

The following are biographical sketches of ordained bishops, ministers and deacons.

REV. JONATHAN YODER (1795-1869)

Rev. Jonathan Yoder was born September 2, 1795, in Berks County, Pennsylvania. His parents were David Yoder and Jacobina Esh Yoder. He received only a few months of actual schooling in a subscription school in Pennsylvania.

He was married to Magdalena Wagner in 1816. They had eleven children.

He was ordained minister in about 1827 and bishop about 1840. He moved to McLean County, Illinois, in the spring of 1851. He organized the congregation which built the first Amish church house in Illinois. He remained bishop and pastor of the Rock Creek Amish Church until his death January 28, 1869.

REV. MICHAEL MILLER (1795-1873)

Rev. Michael Miller was born in Germany, July 28, 1795. He came to Butler County, O., as a young man and lived there until about 1850 when he came to McLean County, Illinois. He served as deacon in the Rock Creek Amish Church. He was one of the men that was responsible for the building of the church house at Rock Creek in 1853. He died August 23, 1873.

REV. JACOB MILLER (1811-1893)

Rev. Jacob Miller was born in Germany, June 18, 1811. His father was Rev. John Miller who came to Butler County and then to McLean County, Illinois. He died October 3, 1859.

Rev. Jacob Miller came to Butler County as a young man and lived there until about 1851 when he came to McLean

County, Illinois. He served as a deacon in the Rock Creek Amish Church until his death. He was one of the solicitors to raise money for the building of the first Amish church building in Illinois in 1853. Rev. Jacob Miller died August 22, 1893.

REV. JOSEPH STUCKEY (1825-1902)

Rev. Joseph Stuckey was born in Alsace, July 12, 1825. His grandparents lived in Bern, Switzerland. His father was Peter Stuckey and his mother Elizabeth Sommers.

He came with his parents to Butler County, Ohio, in 1830. He received a very limited education, the length of his school experience being about three months. He was baptized at the age of eighteen by Rev. Jacob Augspurger, one of the first ministers in the Amish Church in Butler County, Ohio.

He was married to Miss Barbara Roth, December 17, 1844. He had two children. He came to McLean County, Illinois, in 1851. He was ordained as a minister April 8, 1860, by Bishop Jonathan Yoder. He was ordained as a bishop April 26, 1864, by Rev. Jonathan Yoder, assisted by Rev. Christian Ropp and Rev. Jacob Zehr of the Mackinaw Church.

After the death of Rev. Jonathan Yoder in 1869, Rev. Stuckey became the leader of the Amish of Central Illinois. He was bishop and pastor of the church, first at Rock Creek and after 1872 of the North Danvers Church until his death. He died Feb. 5, 1902.

REV. JOHN STRUBHAR (1808-1883)

Rev. John Strubhar was born in Alsace, October 14, 1808. His father was Peter Strubhar and his mother was Mary Garber Strubhar. His father died in Alsace and his mother came to Butler County, O., with the family. They came in about 1827. In 1830 John Strubhar left Butler County and came to McLean County, Illinois. He was one of the first Amish in the state of Illinois.

He was married to Anna Schertz in about 1831. They had ten children.

He was one of the men who was responsible for the organizing of the first Amish Sunday School in about 1865 and also in the building of the first Amish church house in 1853. The Amish conference of United States and Canada that was held in Danvers, Illinois, in 1866 was held in his barn.

He was ordained to the office of deacon April 8, 1860, by Bishop Jonathan Yoder. He served as treasurer of the church until 1872. He remained deacon of the Rock Creek Church and later the North Danvers Church until 1883. He died November 17, 1883.

REV. CHRISTIAN IMHOFF (1840-1881)

Rev. Christian Imhoff was born in Butler County, Ohio, about 1840. He came to McLean County about 1860. He was a member of the Rock Creek Amish Church.

He was married to Mary Strubhar, daughter of Rev. John Strubhar. They had six children.

He was ordained as a deacon in 1868 by Bishop Joseph Stuckey. After 1872 he served as treasurer of the North Danvers Church for a number of years. He served as deacon of the church until 1881. He died in May, 1881.

REV. JOHN STAHLY (1827-1900)

Rev. John Stahly was born in Switzerland, April 12, 1827. He grew to manhood in Switzerland and came to McLean County, Illinois, in 1864. He was ordained as a bishop while in Switzerland. He united with the North Danvers Mennonite Church when he came to McLean County. He served as bishop until 1900. He died June 27, 1900.

REV. JOSEPH STALTER (1807-1878)

Rev. Joseph Stalter was born in Zweibrucken, Bavaria, Germany, in 1807. He was married to Catherine Rediger in about 1830. They had twelve children. He came to America in 1854.

He was ordained as a minister in Germany in about 1840.

He came to McLean County in about 1860. He was a member of the North Danvers Mennonite Church. He died in 1878.

REV. MICHAEL KISTLER (1808-1876)

Rev. J. Michael Kistler was born in Hess-Darmstadt, Germany, March 8, 1808. Here he grew to young manhood. In about 1830 he came to Butler County, Ohio.

He was married to Elizabeth Naffziger, the daughter of Rev. Peter Naffziger, called the "Apostle". He was ordained to the ministry by his father-in-law in the Hessian congregation in Butler County, Ohio, in about 1835. He came to McLean County, Illinois, in about 1842. He became the organizer of the congregation of Hessian Mennonites in McLean County. He served as their pastor until the Rock Creek church house was built in 1853 when the Hessians began to worship with the Yoder Church. This only lasted for a few years when in about 1859 the Hessian congregation, with Rev. Kistler at the head, separated from the Yoder Church. He remained with the Hessian congregation until 1862 when he joined the Christian Church. He died Nov. 12, 1876, in Golden City, Missouri.

REV. PETER E. STUCKEY (1844-)

Rev. Peter E. Stuckey was born in Butler County, Ohio, May 31, 1844. His grandparents lived in Bern, Switzerland. His father was Peter Stuckey and was born in Switzerland in 1800. His mother was Elizabeth Sommer and was born in Lorraine in 1801.

The parents came to Butler County, Ohio, in 1831. Here Peter Stuckey grew up to manhood. In October, 1851, he came to Illinois. He was baptized in 1860 by Bishop Jonathan Yoder and united with the Amish Church at Rock Creek.

He was married to Catherine Engel of Woodford County, Illinois, the daughter of one of the early settlers in Woodford County. The marriage ceremony was performed by his brother, Rev. Joseph E. Stuckey, February 22, 1866. Mrs. Stuckey died Jan. 14, 1927.

Peter Stuckey was ordained minister November, 1868, by

Rev. Joseph Stuckey and became pastor of the East Washington Church. He began preaching in 1869 and was ordained bishop in 1875. In February, 1889, he went to Nebraska. He took charge of the congregation at Aurora, Nebraska. He served two churches at different times at Nebraska and then later, about 1900, went to Iowa where he served two churches. He is at present a retired minister living in Wayland, Iowa. He has reached the ripe age of eighty-three years.

REV. CHRISTIAN GINGERICH (1820-1908)

Rev. Christian Gingerich was born in Andenacht, Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany, October 5, 1820. His father was Michael Gingerich, born in 1789, and his mother Barbara Heinanan, born in 1799. They were married in 1816. Both died in Germany, Barbara Gingerich in 1841 and Michael in 1854. Rev. Christian Gingerich grew to manhood in Germany. He came to America in the spring of 1850. He landed in New Orleans and then came to Butler County, Ohio. In about 1852 he came to McLean County, Illinois, and worked on a farm by the month. He returned to Butler Co. in 1854 and on March 4, married Elizabeth Miller, the daughter of Rev. Daniel Miller of Butler County, Ohio. They returned to Illinois after their marriage and settled in Danvers Township. His first wife died September 5, 1865, and he married the second time to Catherine Gingerich, September 7, 1866. The oldest son of the first wife was John Gingerich, also a minister.

Christian Gingerich was ordained as a minister by Rev. Michael Kistler in 1862. In 1863 he was ordained bishop by Bishop John Naffziger of Walnut in Bureau County, Illinois. He remained a bishop of the South Danvers Mennonite congregation until his death June 20, 1908. He was a Hessian Mennonite preacher.

REV. PETER NAFFZIGER (1787-1885)

Rev. Peter Naffziger was born February 23, 1787, in Gaursheim, Rheinpfalz, Germany. His father died while he was very

young and his mother again married a Naffziger. Peter Naffziger in his boyhood days worked in a flour mill in Rheinpfaltz. He married Barbara Beck, March 8, 1812, at Rimmon Hoff, Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany. They lived on Geiser Hoff, Germany, until 1826, when they came to America. They settled in Canada. They left Canada in about 1830 and came to Butler County, Ohio. Here Rev. Naffziger became pastor of the Hessian congregation formed there. He had been ordained minister while yet in Germany. In 1844 he came to Woodford County, Illinois, and about two years later came to McLean County.

He was called the "Apostle" because he was of a roving disposition and spent much of his time while in Illinois in visiting the various Amish Churches. It is said that he made several trips on foot to New Orleans where a small colony of Amish was found. After coming to Illinois he was a retired minister and died near Congerville, September 16, 1885. He was buried in Imhoff cemetery.

REV. MICHAEL KINSINGER (1814-1895)

Rev. Michael Kinsinger was born in Germany, October 10, 1814. His parents were Daniel and Catherine Schwartzentruber Kinsinger. Daniel was born in 1765 and Catherine in 1771. They were married in 1805. Daniel died in 1828 and Catherine in 1834. Michael was the third of five children. After the death of his father he, being practically homeless, lived with a man called Gingve near Marburg, Germany, for ten years. He first learned the blacksmith's trade and then later the distilling business. He came to America in 1829 and settled in Butler County, Ohio. He came to America on his wedding trip. His wife died on the ocean. Here he married Magdalena Naffziger, the daughter of Apostle Peter Naffziger in 1837. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. Peter Naffziger.

They came to McLean County, Illinois, in 1838. They lived in Bloomington a short time and then rented land in Danvers Township. They were parents of twelve children. The children were raised in a loghouse 16x18 feet, divided into two

rooms and ground for the floor. Rev. Peter Schantz's wife was one of the daughters.

He was ordained to the ministry in the South Danvers Mennonite Church in 1862 by Rev. Michael Kistler. He died June 28, 1895.

REV. PETER GINGERICH ( )

Rev. Peter Gingerich, who was a resident in the Washington community, was ordained to the ministry by Bishop Joseph Stuckey in November, 1868. In about 1880 he affiliated himself with the Partridge Church, Old Mennonites.

REV. SAMUEL MISHLER (1826-1896)

Samuel Mishler was born March 17, 1826, in Pennsylvania. His parents were Abraham and Anna Mishler. He came to Holmes County, Ohio, in his boyhood days. In 1848 he was married to Catherine Miller, the daughter of Abraham and Barbara Miller. His wife was born June 17, 1829. They had eleven children.

Samuel Mishler was ordained to the ministry in Owen County, Indiana, in 1874. He came to McLean County, Illinois, October 1, 1877. He began preaching at the homes of the members and then later held services in the schoolhouse. He moved to a community 15 miles south of Columbus, Kansas, in the autumn of 1880. He began holding services in the community near Columbus, Kansas, about 1881. He remained pastor of the congregation until 1896, when he returned to Central Illinois. Here he died April 10, 1896, and his wife September 19, 1908. They are both buried in the East White Oak Union Cemetery.

REV. JOHN NAFFZIGER (1848-1918)

John Naffziger, son of Valentine Naffziger and Magdalene Imhoff Naffziger was born March 15, 1848, in Bavaria, Germany. He grew to manhood in Germany. He came to America in 1868, settling in Bureau County, Illinois. He married Anna Magdalene Christiansen June 24, 1870. In about 1871 he

moved near Columbus, Kansas. Rev. Naffziger with William and August Naffziger and families served to form the nucleus of the Columbus, Kansas, Church. He united with the church at the age of fourteen. He was ordained to the ministry by Rev. Samuel Mishler in 1890 and served as pastor of the church until his death September 19, 1918.

REV. MICHAEL KINSINGER (1849-1912)

Michael Kinsinger was born September 29, 1849, at Bebelsheimer, Muhle, Germany. His father was Jacob K. Kinsinger, born at Blumenaur, Muhle, Germany, in 1805. His mother's name was Esch and was born at Mallerhof by Zweibrucken, Rheinpfalz. His father died in 1873. Michael with his two brothers and his nephew, Rev. John Kinsinger of Meadows, Illinois, came to America in May, 1874. Michael went to Butler County, Ohio, and a few years later came to a place near Washington, Illinois. He was baptized in the Mennonite Church at the age of fourteen. He was married to Katie Garber near Washington, Illinois, in 1878. He was ordained to the ministry in the East Washington Church in 1889 by Bishop Stuckey. In about 1895, because of difficulties concerning English preaching the East Washington Church divided and Rev. Kinsinger became pastor of the German group. He remained pastor and bishop of the South Washington Church until his death April 10, 1912.

REV. CHRISTIAN IMHOFF ( )

Rev. Christian Imhoff was born in Germany. He came to America and setted in the community near Washington, Illinois. He was ordained to the ministry at the East Washington Church January 10, 1893. When the division came in the East Washington Church Rev. Imhoff went with Rev. Michael Kinsinger and became a minister of the South Washington Church. He attended the first ministers' meeting held in the Conference at the home of Rev. J. H. King August 5, 1899. He died in the winter of 1899.

REV. STEPHEN STAHLY (1842-1916)

Stephen Stahly was born in Switzerland, March 30, 1842. He grew to young manhood in Switzerland. He came to American in 1861 and settled in Livingston County, Illinois. He was married to Miss Barbara Schantz, the oldest sister of Rev. Peter Schantz, in 1866. They had eleven children.

He became a member of the Mennonite Church in his early youth. He was ordained to the ministry in the Flanagan Mennonite Church in 1885. He was later ordained as bishop by Rev. Joseph Stuckey and served the congregation until his death February 26, 1916.

REV. CHRISTIAN REDIGER (1849-)

Christian Rediger was born in Rheinpfalz, Germany, August 26, 1849. His father was Christian Rediger and his mother Magdalena Stalter Rediger. His father died in Europe. His mother came to America. Christian Rediger grew to young manhood in Germany. In 1867 he came to America. He married Catherine Risser March 25, 1875. They had ten children. His wife died November 18, 1919.

He was baptized by Bishop Joseph Stalter in 1863 and united with the Mennonite Church. He was ordained to the ministry in 1878 and was instrumental in organizing the Flanagan Mennonite Church. He was ordained to the office of bishop in 1885 by Bishop Joseph Stuckey. He left Flanagan in 1885 and moved to Aurora, Nebraska. Here he organized the Pleasant View Mennonite Church near Aurora, Nebraska. He is at present a retired minister in the Aurora congregation. He is seventy-eight years old.

REV. ANDREW OESCH ( )

Rev. Andrew Oesch was married to Magdalene Unzicker February 21, 1871. They lived in Bureau County, Illinois. They had four children. In November, 1887, they moved to Aurora, Nebraska. Rev. Oesch had been ordained as minister by Rev. Joseph Burkey at Tiskilwa, Illinois. After November,

1887, he served as a minister in the Pleasant View Mennonite Church at Aurora, Nebraska. He served the Aurora Church until November 1, 1912, when he moved to Normal, Illinois. He is now a retired minister and lives in Califorina.

REV. D. D. AUGSPURGER (1853-)

Rev. D. D. Augspurger was born in Butler County, Ohio, October 16, 1853. His father was David Augspurger, who was born and raised in Butler County, Ohio. He was born in 1824 and died in 1894. His mother was Elizabeth Schertz, born in Alsace-Lorraine in 1826 and came to Butler County when quite young. She died in 1895. Rev. Augspurger was the third youngest child of a family of eight children. He received a common school education. He was baptized in 1869 by Bishop Christian Ropp and united with the Amish Church. He was married to Lena Schrock near Washington, Illinois, December 31, 1875. They had four children.

D. D. Augspurger was ordained a minister in the East Washington Church in the fall of 1889 by Bishop Joseph Stuckey. He served the East Washington Church until December, 1892, when he moved to Aurora, Nebraska, to assist in the work of the church there. In 1895 he left Nebraska and came to Goodland, Indiana, where he organized the Zion Mennonite Church, Goodland, Indiana. His wife died March 18, 1907. August 1, 1910, he married Catherine Sloneker of Butler County, Ohio. Rev. Augspurger served as temporary superintendent of the Gospel Mennonite Mission in Chicago in 1916 and also for about five months as temporary superintendent of the Peoria Mennonite Mission. He then moved to Trenton, Ohio, where he is living at present but still has bishop oversight of the Goodland Mennonite Church.

REV. JOASH STUTZMAN (1853-1891)

Rev. Joash Stutzman was born October 16, 1853, in McLean County, Illinois. His father was Solomon Stutzman, born in Pennsylvania, October 16, 1829. His mother was Sarah Yoder, the daughter of Rev. Jonathan Yoder born December 7, 1827,

in Pennsylvania. Solomon Stutzman came to Fairfield County, Ohio, when a boy and from there to McLean County, Illinois, in about 1850. Sarah Yoder Stutzman came to McLean County from Pennsylvania in 1851. They were married in 1852. Joash's mother died December 23, 1896, and his father March 10, 1902.

Joash Stutzman was educated in the district schools in McLean County. He united with the Rock Creek Church in his early youth. He married Magdalene Miller, a grandchild of Rev. Michael Miller, September 16, 1880. They had four children.

He was ordained to the ministry in the North Danvers Mennonite Church in 1882 by Bishop Joseph Stuckey. Rev. Stutzman's ministerial career was very short. He died September 19, 1891.

REV. PETER SCHANTZ (1853-1925)

Peter Schantz was born April 14, 1853, near Congerville, Woodford County, Illinois. His father was Jacob Schantz, born about 1822 in Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany. His mother was Catherine Deiss Schantz, born in 1824 in Hesse-Darmstadt, Germany. His parents came to America on their wedding trip in about 1847 and settled on a farm near Congerville. His father died in April, 1864, and his mother September, 1866. He grew up as an orphan boy. He was the second child in the family, his sister, Mrs. Stephen Stahly, being the oldest. His school advantages were very meager, getting only a few months' schooling each year. He was baptized by Rev. Joseph Stuckey in 1872 and became a member of the North Danvers Mennonite Church.

December 23, 1875, he married Anna Kinsinger, daughter of Rev. Michael Kinsinger. He was ordained as a minister by Rev. Joseph Stuckey in 1882 and a bishop in 1900. He served as minister in the North Danvers Church until 1892 when he became pastor of the newly organized church at East White Oak. He was pastor of the East White Oak Church until 1910

when he moved to Normal, Illinois, and organized a congregation there. He served as field secretary of the Central Conference Mennonite Church for a number of years. He died July 24, 1925.

REV. JOSEPH H. KINSINGER (1855-1925)

Rev. Joseph H. Kinsinger was born at the Hirshbacher, Muhle, Rheinpfalz, Germany, September 28, 1855. At the age of eighteen he left his father and mother and came to America because of compulsary military training. He came over with Rev. Michael Kinsinger and his brothers. They landed at New York May 11, 1874. He went to Butler County, Ohio, and then later came to Washington, Illinois. His parents came to Butler County, Ohio, in the latter part of the seventies and he went back and joined them. In about 1881 he with his parents came to Meadows, Illinois. He united with the Mennonite Church while in Germany. In 1885 he married Jacobina Naffziger. She died October 19, 1894. In 1897 he married Barbara Bertsche. On August 30, 1891, Joseph Kinsinger was ordained to the ministry by Bishop Joseph Stuckey. On October 23, 1897, he was ordained as bishop. Rev. Kinsinger served as one of the pastors of the Meadows Church until January 1, 1925, when he retired. He died May 8, 1925.

REV. AARON ROSZHART (1887-1918)

Aaron Roszhart, son of John D. and Elizabeth Roszhart, was born October 1, 1887, northeast of Meadows. Here he grew up to young manhood. He united with the Meadows Mennonite Church in 1901. On January 19, 1910, he was married to Miss Amelia Lehman. They had two children. He attended Goshen College for six weeks in 1905. Later he spent two years at Moody Bible Institute. He was ordained as a minister February 13, 1916, and March 1, left for Iowa to take charge of a congregation at Manson, Iowa. He was there seven months and then returned to Meadows where he was a minister until the time of his death. He died December 29, 1918.

REV. VALENTINE STRUBHAR (1859-)

Valentine Strubhar was born in McLean County, four miles northwest of Danvers, April 23, 1859. His father was Peter Strubhar. Peter Strubhar's father and mother were Peter and Mary Garber Strubhar of Alsace-Lorraine. Peter's father died in Alsace and his mother came to America in 1835, settling in Butler County, Ohio. Peter and his mother came to McLean County in 1837. Peter Strubhar was married to Barbara Sweitzer, the oldest daughter of John and Marie Sweitzer, natives of Nancy, France. Peter Strubhar settled on a farm northwest of Danvers where Valentine was born. In the spring of 1865 Valentine with his parents moved to Washington, Illinois. Here he grew to manhood.

Valentine Strubhar was baptized in the autumn of 1879 by Rev. Peter Stuckey and became a member of the East Washington Church. He was married to Katie Guth, daughter of John and Mary Guth of Washington, Illinois, on February 1, 1883.

He was active in church work before he was ordained. At the age of fourteen he taught a Sunday School class in German spelling and was also superintendent of the Sunday School for about one year. He was ordained to the ministry January 10, 1893, by Bishop Peter Stuckey and Rev. Peter Schantz. A few years later he was ordained to the office of bishop. Rev. Strubhar has served on the Foreign Mission Board from its beginning and has been very much interested in all the activities of the church. He is at present the senior pastor of the Calvary Mennonite Church and one of the oldest ministers in the Conference.

REV. JOHN GINGERICH (1856-)

John Gingerich was born December 10, 1856, in Danvers Township, McLean County, Illinois. His father was Rev. Christian Gingerich who was born in Germany in 1820 and came to America in 1850. His mother was Elizabeth Miller of Butler County, Ohio. John Gingerich grew to manhood in Danvers

Township. He received a common school education. He united with the church at the age of fifteen, becoming a member of the South Danvers Mennonite Church. He was baptized by his father.

He was married to Catherine Slaubaugh, the daughter of Daniel Slaubaugh of Maryland, who came to McLean County about 1874. They had four children.

John Gingerich was ordained to the ministry September 1885, by Bishop Christian Gingerich. In 1893 he was ordained to the office of bishop by Rev. Peter Schantz and Bishop Christian Gingerich. On February 24, 1916, Rev. Gingerich moved to the town of Danvers where he now resides. The church was moved to town at about the same time. He retired from the ministry in 1922. He is one of the oldest ministers in the Conference.

REV. JOHN KINSINGER (1854-)

John Kinsinger was born June 5, 1854, in Butler County, Ohio. His father was Peter Kinsinger, born in Zweibrucken, Bavaria, in Germany, January 28, 1827. Peter's father was John Kinsinger, born in Germany May 26, 1801. Peter's mother was Magdalena Oesch, born in 1803. She came to Butler County in about 1840.

Peter Kinsinger's wife was Catherine Augspurger, born in Butler County, Ohio, December 23, 1834. They were married February 22, 1853. Peter Kinsinger died September 7, 1887, and Mrs. Kinsinger on March 5, 1858. John was the oldest of three children. He grew to manhood in Butler County and received his education in the public schools. He was baptized in the fall of 1872 by Rev. Nicholas Augspurger and united with the Amish Church. He was a Sunday School teacher while in Butler County, Dr. Mosiman, president of Bluffton College, being one of his pupils.

In December, 1881, he came to McLean County, Illinois. January 30, 1883, he was married to Louise Schoenbeck, who was born March 4, 1855, and was the daughter of Daniel Schoen-

beck. Her mother was the daughter of Rev. Daniel Unzicker who was a minister in Canada and later in Butler County, Ohio. They had four children.

John Kinsinger was ordained to the ministry in the South Danvers Mennonite Church in September, 1885, by Bishop Christian Gingerich. In 1893 he was ordained to the office of bishop by Bishop Gingerich and Rev. Peter Schantz. He was superintendent of the South Danvers Mennonite Sunday School before and after his ordination for a number of years. He was one of the first secretaries of the Conference. Rev. Kinsinger retired as a minister in 1922 and is at present living at Danvers, Illinois.

REV. JOSEPH H. KING (1861-)

J. H. King was born May 2, 1861, near Carlock, Illinois. His father was Daniel King, who came from Butler County, Ohio. His grandfather was Michael King who came from Germany to Butler County, Ohio. J. H. King's mother was Mary Hottler, also from Butler County, Ohio. She died in 1906 and Daniel King in 1918.

J. H. King grew to manhood in the vicinity of Carlock. He was baptized by Bishop Joseph Stuckey in 1876 and united with the North Danvers Mennonite Church. He married Salina A. Lantz, the daughter of Simeon Lantz, October 16, 1883. They had three children.

J. H. King was ordained to the ministry by Bishop Joseph Stuckey April 17, 1892. He was ordained bishop in 1900. He was one of the ministers of the North Danvers Church until 1914 when he became pastor of the Carlock Mennonite Church. He remained pastor until 1920 when he retired as a pastor. Rev. King has been very active in church work. He was largely responsible for the introduction of English into the North Danvers Church and was also instrumental in the organizing of the Carlock Church. He has been a member of the Mission Board since its organization; he is also a member of the Congo Inland Mission Board. He served as field secretary for a

number of years and is at present secretary of the Mennonite Sanitarium Association. He is actively engaged in church and Conference activities and is a member of the Ordination Committee of the Conference.

REV. JOHN KOHLER (1859-)

John Kohler was born in Switzerland, May 10, 1859. His father was Christian Kohler and his mother Susanna Maurer Kohler. His parents were married in Switzerland and lived there until 1862 when they came to America. Christian Kohler died in 1874 and Susanna Kohler in 1876.

John Kohler grew to manhood in McLean and Woodford Counties. After the death of his parents he lived with his sister till 1880. John Kohler married Katie Maurer, the daughter of Nicholas Maurer, one of the earliest settlers in Central Illinois, March 15, 1885. He was ordained to the ministry in the North Danvers Church in 1899 and to the office of bishop in 1903. He served the North Danvers Mennonite Church until about 1921. He resides at present in McLean County, Illinois.

REV. JOSEPH B. ZEHR (1853-)

Joseph B. Zehr was born in Alsace-Lorraine, October 3, 1853. His grandfather was Joseph Zehr and his grandmother's name was Verley. His father's name was Joseph Zehr and his mother's Catherine Kohler. His parents came to America in 1857 and settled near Metamora, Woodford County, Illinois. In 1867 he came to Livingstone County, Illinois, near Flanagan. He united with the Amish Church in 1869 and was baptized by Rev. Christian Ropp. He was married to Phoebe King, the daughter of Jacob King, November 18, 1879. The marriage was performed by Rev. Joseph Stuckey.

Before his ordination he served as church trustee, secretary of the church, Sunday School teacher and Sunday School superintendent. Joseph Zehr was ordained to the ministry in 1887 and to the office of bishop by Joseph Stuckey October 19, 1890.

He is at present bishop of the Flanagan Mennonite Church. He served on the Home Mission Board when the Chicago and Peoria Missions were established. He is one of the oldest ministers of the Conference.

REV. ANDREW VERCLER (1850-)

Andrew Vercler was born October 21, 1850, on a farm near the village called the Azoudange Department of the Meurthe, Province Lorraine, France. His father was Christian Vercler, born August 5, 1817, at the same place where Andrew was born. His father was a minister and was ordained in 1862. Andrew's grandfather was Rev. Andrew Vercler, an elder of the Mennonite Church in Lorraine.

His mother was Jacobina Schertz, born January 23, 1829, in a village called Lorentz Department of Bas French Rhine, Province of Alsace, France. His grandmother was Catherine Sommer.

Andrew Vercler grew to manhood in Lorraine. He attended a French school for thirty-five months and a German school for five months. He joined the Sarrebourg Mennonite Church in April, 1865. He was baptized by Elder Hirschy, one of the two elders of the Sarrebourg Mennonite Church in Lorraine. He came to America in February, 1874, with his father and mother and four brothers. He settled on a farm northwest of Chenoa in McLean County, Ill.

He was married to Jacobina Lehman February 3, 1876. Jacobina Lehman was born near Danvers, Illinois, January 13, 1858. Her father came from Lorraine, France, and her mother from Bavaria, Germany. Andrew Vercler and wife had five children.

He served as a Sunday School teacher in 1889 and in 1891 was elected superintendent of the Sunday School. He was ordained to the ministry August 30, 1891, at the newly built Meadows Mennonite Church, by Rev. Joseph Stuckey. October 23, 1897, he was ordained as bishop. He retired from active ministry January 1, 1925. He is at present living at Meadows,

Illinois. Rev. Vercler has served as Home Mission Treasurer since the beginning in 1908 until the present (1927). He is also a member of the Home Mission Committee.

REV. JOHN C. LEHMAN ( )

Rev. John C. Lehman was born in Pennsylvania, June 14, 1862. He grew to manhood in Elkhart County, Middlebury Township, Indiana. He was baptized April, 1893, by Rev. Peter Schantz, and united with the Silver Street Mennonite Church.

He married Anna S. Elliot, January 29, 1882. Rev. Lehman was ordained to the ministry December 15, 1901. He became pastor of the Mennonite congregation at Topeka, Indiana. He moved to Topeka from the Silver Street Community in 1902. He organized the Topeka congregation and established the Sunday School work. He retired from the ministry January 26, 1919. He was ordained bishop at the same time as minister. His congregation was one of the charter members of the Central Conference Mennonite Church. He served one year as president of the Conference.

REV. AARON AUGSPURGER (1865-)

Aaron Augspurger was born December 3, 1865, in Butler County, Ohio. His father's name was Joseph S. Augspurger, also of Butler County. His grandfather was Rev. Joseph Augspurger, born in Alsace, France.

Aaron Augspurger's mother was Jacobina Stuckey Augspurger, born in Butler County, February 23, 1846. Her father was Rev. Joseph Stuckey, whose biography has been given. Aaron's parents left Butler County when he was a few months old and came to McLean County, Illinois. He grew to manhood in the Danvers Community and received a common school education. He was baptized by Bishop Stuckey in the fall of 1883 and became a member of the North Danvers Mennonite Church. February 20, 1889, he was married to Emma Schertz, the daughter of Peter Schertz. Her father was born in Alsace

and came to Butler County and later to McLean County, Illinois. Aaron Augspurger, after his marriage settled in Cheney Grove Township, McLean County. He was ordained a minister June 10, 1894, by Bishop Joseph Stuckey, his grandfather. He was ordained as a bishop in 1900 by Rev. Peter Schantz and Rev. J. B. Zehr.

Rev. Augspurger was very largely responsible for the first ministers' meeting held at the home of Rev. J. H. King, August 5, 1899. He served as secretary of the Conference for many years. He also served as a member of the Foreign Mission Committee and as a member of the Publication Board. He served very largely as the historian of the Conference, writing many accounts of the various activities of the church. He has been vitally interested in all activities of the Conference.

REV. EMANUEL TROYER (1871-)

Rev. Emanuel Troyer was born December 31, 1871, near Hudson, Illinois. His father was Mannasses Troyer. He was born in Holmes County, Ohio. His grandfather was Jonas Troyer, who came from Holmes County, Ohio, to Chicago and then to Peoria on horseback. He sold his horse at Peoria and walked to Bloomington.

Emanuel Troyer's mother was Catherine Salzman of Butler County, Ohio. Her parents came to McLean County, Illinois, in 1851. Emanuel Troyer grew to manhood in McLean County on a farm near Hudson. He received his education in the public schools and attended Moody Bible Institute for about six weeks. He was baptized in the spring of 1888 in the North Danvers Church by Bishop Stuckey. He served as superintendent of Sunday School and also as chorister for a time in 1894. He was ordained to the ministry in April, 1899, by Rev. Peter Schantz and Rev. J. H. King. He was married to Ida Horst of Bloomington, Illinois, whose parents had come from Lebanon County, Pennsylvania.

He was ordained bishop in 1909. He served as Conference president for a number of years. He has also served

on the Foreign Mission Committee. He was largely responsible for the establishing of the Mennonite Sanitarium at Bloomington, serving as president of the Board from its beginning. He has served as field secretary for a number of years.

REV. ALLEN H. MILLER (1870-)

Allen H. Miller was born November 29, 1870, near Shore, Lagrange County, Indiana. His father was Noah Y. Miller, born October 14, 1845, near Berlin, Holmes County, Ohio. His father's parents moved by wagon to Elkhart County, Indiana, in 1851. Allen Miller's mother was Susanna Miller, born in Holmes County, Ohio, December 23, 1849. She moved with her parents to Lagrange County, Indiana, in 1852. Allen Miller grew to manhood and received a common school education in Lagrange County, Indiana. In 1894 he came to Tremont, Illinois, and worked on a farm. He was baptized in the spring of 1889 by Bishop D. J. Johns and united with the Clinton Frame Amish Church. He served as secretary of the Sunday School and later Sunday School teacher until he came to Illinois.

On December 31, 1895, he married Lydia M. Ropp, daughter of Andrew W. and Mary Albrecht Ropp. His wife was born September 21, 1877, in Elm Grove Township, Tazewell County, Illinois.

He was ordained to the ministry August 6, 1905, by Rev. Peter Schantz and Rev. Valentine Strubhar. He became pastor of the newly organized church now called Bethel Mennonite. He was ordained bishop by Rev. Valentine Strubhar in 1914. He served as president of the Sunday School Conference in 1908 and in 1909 was elected president of the Church Conference. He has served as president of the Church Conference for about ten years, serving at various times and is at present the president of the Conference. He has served as president of the Home Mission Committee for a number of years and has also served as a member of the Hospital Board. He also served a few years as a member of the Bluffton College Board.

REV. LEE LANTZ (1873-)

Rev. Lee Lantz was born near Congerville, Illinois, June 15, 1873. His father was Solomon Lantz who came from Pennsylvania, and his mother Malinda Yoder Lantz, who also came from Pennsylvania. Lee Lantz grew to manhood in the vicinity of Congerville. He received his education in the public school and in the Washington high school and also attended Eureka College. He joined the North Danvers Mennonite Church in 1891 and was baptized by Rev. Joseph Stuckey. He served as Sunday School teacher and also superintendent. Also held different offices in Christian Endeavor Society.

He was ordained to the ministry in April, 1899, at Congerville. He was ordained as a bishop in 1907. He served as pastor in the Congerville Mennonite Church, First Mennonite Church, Normal and the Nampa Mennonite Church, Nampa, Idaho, where he is at present pastor. He served as Conference secretary for several years. He was married to Miss Riesser, the daughter of John P. Riesser and Phoebe Miller Riesser.

REV. L. B. HAIGH (1881-)

Rev. Lawrence Benjamin Haigh was born in Bradford, England, January 15, 1881. His father was Benjamin Haigh and his mother Ruth Tuck Haigh. He came to United States with his parents in 1884. He grew to manhood at Holley, New York. Here he received his education from the Holley Union School and Academy. He was baptized in 1900 and united with the Baptist Church. In 1903 he received a call to Christian work and in January, 1904, he entered Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, Illinois.

He was married to Rose Boehning, born near Elgin, Illinois, December 20, 1877, in February, 1907. His wife was converted at the age of five. She received her education in the public school near Elgin, Illinois. In 1901 she entered the deaconess work of the Evangelical Church and in 1903 entered Moody Bible Institute to prepare for foreign mission

work. As a girl she had read David Livingston's life, which deeply impressed her and gave her a deep longing to go to Africa.

Miss Boehning and Rev. Haigh left for British East Africa in April, 1906, under the direction of the African Inland Mission. They were married at the Mission Chapel of the African Inland Mission at Kijabe, British East Africa. After three years on the field they returned to the home land. Rev. Haigh was ordained to the ministry at the home of S. E. Maurer, Carlock, Illinois, by Rev. J. H. King. In March, 1911, Rev. and Mrs. Haigh were sent to the Belgian Congo, West Central Africa, to open a new mission field. They remained on the field until 1914 when they returned on their furlough. They went to the field again in 1915 and remained until 1920. Rev. Haigh was instrumental in opening the first two mission stations and also made the first investigations for the opening of the work among the Bampendi tribe. He served as the legal representative of the mission to the government from 1912 to 1920. He also served as chairman of the Field Committee and was the secretary and treasurer of the station till 1920. He served as pastor of the Danvers Mennonite Church in 1921 and 1922 and was also editor of the Christian Evangel from 1921 to 1923.

REV. GEORGE GUNDY (1880-)

Rev. George I. Gundy was born April 3, 1880, one mile east of Carlock. His father was Jacob Gundy, who was born in Lee County, Iowa. His grandfather was Rev. John Gundy, who came from Butler County, Ohio, to Lee County, Iowa, in about 1847. The Gundy family was one of the first five families that came to Butler County, Ohio, in 1819.

George Gundy's mother was Lena Kinsinger Gundy, daughter of Rev. Michael Kinsinger and granddaughter of (Apostle) Peter Naffziger. George Gundy grew to manhood in the Carlock community. He received his common school education and also attended Moody Bible Institute for several months.

He was baptized by Rev. Joseph Stuckey in 1899 and united with the North Danvers Mennonite Church. He served as Sunday School teacher and also Sunday School superintendent. He also served as township president. In 1904 he was married to Clara Strubhar, daughter of Rev. Valentine Strubhar, by Rev. Peter Shantz.

He was ordained as a minister October 4, 1909, by Rev. Joseph Zehr and Rev. Valentine Strubhar. He was ordained as a bishop in 1915 by Rev. Peter Schantz. Rev. Gundy became pastor of the Congerville Mennonite Church in the spring of 1909. He served the church fifteen years and during this time received one hundred and twenty-one into the church, preached one thousand five hundred and sixty sermons, officiated at sixty funerals and married thirteen couples. In the fifteen years Rev. Gundy lived fourteen miles from his church and drove in that time about sixty thousand miles to serve his church. Rev. Gundy was called by the Meadows Mennonite Church and began his work January 4, 1925. He served as secretary of the Ministerial Association from its beginning in 1911 until 1926. He has been superintendent of the Old People's Home at Meadows, Illinois, since 1925.

REV. EUGENE AUGSPURGER (1874-)

Rev. Eugene Augspurger was born on his grandfather's farm six miles northwest of Danvers, April 24, 1874. His father was Joseph Augspurger who came from Butler County, Ohio, to Danvers Township in 1866. His grandfather was Rev. Joseph Augspurger born in Alsace, France, May 19, 1818. His great-grandfather was Rev. Jacob Augspurger of Butler County, Ohio, who came with the first settlers from Alsace to Butler County in 1819.

His mother was Jacobina Stuckey Augspurger, born in Butler County, February 23, 1846. Her father was Father Stuckey. Eugene Augspurger grew to manhood in the Danvers community. He received a common school education and attended Moody Bible Institute in 1911 for two months.

He was baptized by Father Stuckey in 1888 and united with the North Danvers Mennonite Church. He was married to Mary Carolina Gundy, February 10, 1898. His wife was born March 4, 1873. She was the daughter of Jacob Gundy and Mrs. Lena Kinsinger Gundy.

He was ordained to the ministry in 1912 by Rev. J. H. King and became the pastor of the Tiskilwa Mennonite Church. He served the church until 1920 when he accepted a call to the Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana. He served the Goshen Church until September, 1921, when he moved to Normal, Illinois. He received a call from the Pleasant View Mennonite Church, Aurora, Nebraska, June, 1923, which church he is still serving. He was ordained as bishop in 1920 by Rev. J. H. King.

REV. JOHN LITWILLER (1874-)

Rev. John W. Litwiller was born in Hopedale Township, Tazewell County, Illinois, August 17, 1874. His father was Joseph Litwiller, born in Butler County, Ohio. His grandfather was Joseph Litwiller and his grandmother Barbara Ulrich Litwiller. His mother was Catherine Birkey Litwiller, born in Tazewell County, Illinois. Her father was Christian Birkey and her mother Catherine Moseman Birkey.

John Litwiller grew to manhood in the Hopedale community. He was baptized by Bishop Christian Naffziger of the Amish Mennonite Church in 1894. In 1899 he was married to Mary A. Roth by Rev. Andrew Vercler. His wife's father was Christian L. Roth, born in Alsace, France, and her mother Verena Roszhart, born in Tazewell County, Illinois. His wife's grandfather was Benedict Roth and her grandmother Catherine Lauber Roth. Her mother's father was John Roszhart and her mother's mother Grace Dierberger Roszhart.

John Litwiller served as superintendent of the Sunday School before his ordination. He was ordained to the ministry in 1908 by Rev. Peter Schantz and became pastor of the Boyn-

ton Mennonite Church. Rev. Litwiller is still serving as senior pastor of the Church.

REV. JACOB SOMMER (1878-)

Rev. Jacob Sommer was born at Flanagan, Illinois, July 18, 1878. His father was Joseph Sommers and his mother Anna Schertz Sommer. Both came from Alsace-Lorraine. He moved to Pontiac, Illinois, in 1887 and to Goodland, Indiana, in 1895. He was married to Sarah Augspurger a daughter of Rev. D. D. Augspurger of Goodland, Indiana. He was ordained to the ministry in October, 1907, and became pastor of the Zion Mennonite Church, Goodland, Indiana. In the fall of 1910 Rev. and Mrs. Sommer volunteered for city mission work. They moved to Chicago in November, 1911, and Rev. Sommer became assistant pastor of the Mennonite Gospel Mission, 62nd St., Chicago. He served the mission until 1914 when he became superintendent of the new mission station opened in Peoria, Illinois, called the Mennonite Gospel Mission. Rev. Sommer is at present superintendent of the Peoria Mission.

REV. PETER NAFFZIGER (1884-)

Rev. Peter D. Naffziger was born in 1884 at Metamora, Illinois. His father was Peter Naffziger, born in Alsace-Lorraine. His mother was Catherine Belsley.

Peter D. Naffziger lived near Metamora until 1895 when he came with his parents to Goodland, Indiana. He received his common school education at Goodland and attended Moody Bible Institute for a few weeks. He was baptized by D. D. Augspurger in 1896 and united with the Zion Mennonite Church near Goodland, Indiana. He was married December 12, 1912, to Mattie M. Zehr, born November 21, 1889. His wife is the daughter of Rev. J. B. Zehr and Phoebe King Zehr.

Peter D. Naffziger was ordained to the ministry in 1910 by Rev. Lee Lantz and Rev. Emanuel Troyer. Rev. Naffziger is at present pastor of the Zion Mennonite Church at Goodland, Indiana.

REV. JOHN KENNEL (1877-)

John J. Kennel was born in Morton Township, Tazewell County, Illinois, September 19, 1877. His father was Jacob Kennel, a brother of Rev. Peter Kennel of Butler Co., Ohio, and his grandfather, John Kennel. His grandmother was Magdalena Naffziger Kennel, a sister of Rev. Peter Naffziger (Apostle). His mother was Catherine Garber.

John Kennel grew to manhood in Morton Township. He was a school teacher for a number of years. He was baptized August 20, 1893, by Rev. Michael Kinsinger. He was married January 30, 1907, to Antonia C. Gingerich. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. Michael Kinsinger. His wife's father was Otto Gingerich and her grandfather Jacob Gingerich. Her mother was Christiana Stutte Gingerich and her grandmother Catherine Otto Gingerich. John Kennel was ordained to the ministry February 16, 1912, by Rev. J. H. King with the assistance of Rev. John Kinsinger and Rev. Joseph Kinsinger. He served as superintendent of the Sunday School for many years before his ordination and also served as a Sunday School teacher. He has served as pastor of the South Washington Mennonite Church from the time of his ordination until the present time.

REV. BEN ESCH (1887-)

Rev. Ben Esch was born August 24, 1887, near Washington, Illinois. His father was Peter Esch and his grandfather Christian Esch, who came from Alsace-Lorraine. His mother was Catherine Schertz Esch, daughter of Christian Schertz. His grandfather Schertz also came from Alsace.

Ben Esch grew to manhood on a farm near Washington, Illinois. He received a common school education and then attended Goshen College for four years where he graduated from the Academy. He also attended Bluffton College for a few years.

He was baptized January, 1903, by Rev. Valentine Strub-

har and Rev. Emanuel Troyer. August 7, 1912, he was married to Anna E. Schutt. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. Valentine Strubhar. His wife was the daughter of Abraham Schutt and Harriet Skinner Schutt.

He was ordained at the East Washington Church December, 1911, by Rev. Peter Schantz. He is at present assistant pastor of the Calvary Mennonite Church. He served as editor of the Christian Evangel from 1916 to 1919; Conference secretary from 1922-1925; secretary of the Mission Board, 1916-1925. He is at present secretary of the Mission Board.

REV. ALLEN YODER (1874-)

Rev. Allen Yoder was born in Elkhart County, Indiana, October 1, 1874. His father was Manasses Yoder, born in Logan County, Ohio, in January, 1848. His mother was Lydia Smoker Yoder, born in Elkhart County, Indiana, January, 1853. Allen Yoder grew up to manhood in the vicinity of Goshen. He received a common school education in the public schools of Elkhart County. He was baptized in June, 1890, by Rev. D. J. Johns. He accepted Christ through the preaching of Rev. J. S. Coffman.

He was married to Laura McConaughy, November 11, 1896. His wife was born December 9, 1875, and died April 16, 1920. He was married the second time to Mrs Sophia Ummel Vercler. She was born February 27, 1886, in Switzerland and came to this country in 1889.

He was ordained to the ministry April 20, 1913, as minister and bishop by Rev. Valentine Strubhar. He became pastor of the Silver Street Mennonite Church, which church he is serving at present. Rev. Yoder attended Moody Bible Institute for several months after his ordination. He took a trip through the Holy Lands in the spring of 1914. He has served as president of the Mission Board; president of the Conference and on the Bluffton College Board. He is at present the Central Conference representative on the Relief Committee.

REV. E. T. ROWE (1885-)

Rev. E. T. Rowe was born at Aberdeen, Scotland, Jan. 3, 1885, in military barracks and from early childhood desired to be a soldier. He left home at an early age and enlisted in the British army. He was converted May 11, 1904. Soon after his conversion he left the army and trained for definite Christian work. He then returned to the barracks and encampments to do evangelistic work. He was ordained to the ministry November, 1908. He traveled the Midlands of England in a caravan preaching the gospel. He came to America in 1913, arriving at Chicago May 1. He became pastor of the Ashburn and Evergreen Park Methodist Churches, which pastorate he held until 1917. During 1916 he conducted a Bible class at the Mennonite Gospel Mission on Tuesday evenings. He joined the Mennonite congregation December 8, 1917. He was appointed superintendent of the Mennonite Gospel Mission at Chicago, June 30, 1918, which position he holds at present. October 23, 1914, he married Violet M. Edmunds of Burwash, Sussex, England. They were married at Ionia, Michigan.

REV. W. S. SHELLY (1885-)

Rev. Warren S. Shelly was born near Shelly Station, in Berks County, Pennsylvania, Jan. 15, 1885. His first five years were spent on a farm in Berks County. His parents then moved to Allentown, Pennsylvania, after which he resided in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He attended the Bethlehem high school, also Allentown preparatory and in 1905 and 1906 Bluffton College. In 1906-1908 he attended Moravian College and Theological Seminary.

November 29, 1906, he was married to Viola E. Anderson, daughter of Benjamin and Mrs. Hannah Anderson of Allentown, Pennsylvania. He was baptized August 4, 1901, by Rev. A. B. Shelly, pastor of the East Swamp Mennonite Church. He helped to organize the Mennonite Church at Allentown, Pennsylvania; was one of the charter members and served as the first secretary of the congregation. He was teacher of a Sun-

day School class; president of Christian Endeavor Society served as assistant pastor for two years to Rev. A. B. Shelly and also to Rev. W. S. Gottshall. He was ordained to the ministry July 11, 1909, at the First Mennonite Church, Allentown, Pennsylvania, by Rev. A. B. Shelly, assisted by Rev. W. S. Gottshall and Rev. Wm. H. Grubb. He held the pastorate at Wadsworth, Ohio, in July 18, 1909 to July 1, 1918. He was field secretary for the Home Mission Board of General Conference 1918-1919. He was pastor of the First Mennonite Church, Chicago, 1919. He became pastor of the Carlock Mennonite Church June 2, 1920, and is at present pastor of the church.

REV. W. H. GRUBB (1879-)

William H. Grubb, son of Rev. N. B. and Salome Grubb, was born in Schwenksville, Pennsylvania, September 28, 1879. When fours years of age his parents moved to the city of Philadelphia, where he attended the public schools and later the Temple University.

In May, 1902, the Eastern District Conference in annual session licensed him to preach. In January, 1903, the Home Mission and Church Extension Board stationed him at Allentown, Pennsylvania, where he organized a congregation and a church building was erected under his pastorate. In 1905 he was called to the newly organized congregation at Perkasie, Pennsylvania, where he was likewise successful in building a church. In connection with this charge he also served the Quakertown and East Swamp Churches in and near Quakertown, Pennsylvania.

August 1, 1913, Rev. Grubb accepted a call to the Apostolic Mennonite Church in Trenton, Butler County, Ohio. The congregation had recently built a new and modern church in the town and abandoned the old church in the country. Here he was instrumental in bringing about a harmonious and working organization and his ministry was blessed with a large number of additions to the church. In 1921 he was called to the First

Mennonite Church in Normal, Illinois. During this pastorate the membership has been considerably increased and progressive program of activities as well as a building program adopted. He was ordained to the Gospel Ministry September 13, 1903, and to the office of bishop June 24, 1906.

Rev. Grubb's activities have not been confined to his local church. He has also been active in Conference work. He served as president of the Eastern District Conference, also a member of the Publication Board and one of the editors of the Year Book and of other various committees. When a member of the Middle District Conference he was likewise a member of committees at various times. He was the founder of the Year Book of the Central Conference and for four years its editor and has been active in various ways in the larger work of the church.

REV. AARON D. EGLI (1890-)

Rev. Aaron D. Egli was born September 16, 1890, near Hopedale, Illinois. His father was Christ Egli and his mother Fannie Augspurger Egli. He grew to manhood in the vicinity of Hopedale and Delavan. He received his common school education in Hittle Township and his high school in Hopedale and Delavan. He also attended the University of Illinois. He attended Moody Bible Institute and took a correspondence course in Witmarsum Seminary.

He was baptized November, 1905, by Rev. Peter Schantz and united with the Boynton Mennonite Church near Hopedale. He served as chorister for a number of years and was also president of the Christian Endeavor Society. He organized four Sunday Schools in needy fields.

July 9, 1912, he married Myrtle Canopy, daughter of Frank and Mary Canopy. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. Lee Lantz. He was ordained to the ministry March 30, 1919, at the home of his father near Kouts, Indiana, by Rev. Joseph Zehr. Rev. Egli was instrumental in starting the Kouts Mennonite Church. He was ordained as a bishop May 23,

1926, by Rev. Emanuel Troyer at the home of Christ Egli near Kouts, Indiana. He is at present pastor of the Kouts Mennonite Church.

REV. ERNEST HOSTETTLER (1894-)

Rev. Ernest Hostettler was born in Lagrange County, Indiana, March 11, 1894. His father was Moses P. Hostettler. His grandfather was Paul Hostettler and his grandmother, Esther Hostettler. His grandmother was Caroline Mehl Hostettler, daughter of Jacob C. and Lucinda Mehl who came to Lagrange County, Indiana, from Ohio in 1876.

Ernest Hostettler grew to manhood in Lagrange County, and after receiving his common school ducation he received a high school education at Topeka, Indiana. He taught public school for five years. He also attended Goshen College for some time. He was baptized October 15, 1908, by Rev. J. C. Lehman and united with the Topeka Mennonite Church.

June 9, 1915, he was married to Susie Kitchen, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Kitchen of Wolcottville, Indiana. Before his ordination he was teacher of a Sunday School class. He was ordained to the ministry June 9, 1918, by Rev. J. C. Lehman and became pastor of the Topeka Mennonite Church.

REV. EMANUEL ULRICH (1890-)

Rev. Emanuel Ulrich was born in Livingston County, Illinois, November 17, 1890. His father was Peter J. Ulrich and his grandfather Joseph Ulrich. His grandmother was Fannie Ulrich. His mother was Mary Egli Ulrich. Her father was Christian Egli and her mother was Mary Egli.

Emanuel Ulrich grew to manhood in Waldo Township, Livingston County, near Flanagan. He was baptised June, 1903, by Rev. C. R. Egli. December 23, 1913, he was married to Katie Zehr. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. Stephen Stahly. His wife's father was Valentine Zehr and her grandfather was Joseph Zehr. Her mother was Elizabeth Stahly Zehr, daughter of Rev. Stephen and Barbara Stahly.

Before his ordination Emanuel Ulrich was a Sunday School teacher for two years and a superintendent of the Sunday School for three years. He was ordained to the ministry in May, 1918, by Rev. Lee Lantz. He is serving as assistant pastor in the Flanagan Mennonite Church.

REV. WILLIAM B. WEAVER (1887-)

Rev. William B. Weaver was born at Nappanee, Indiana, January 24, 1887. His father was Emanuel Weaver, born December 9, 1849 in Holmes County, Ohio, and died in Elkhart County, Indiana, July 13, 1920. His grandfather was David Weaver, born in Weaverland, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. He came to Holmes County, Ohio, when six months old. Rev. Weaver's mother was Magdalena Yoder Weaver, born August 8, 1853, in Lagrange County, Indiana. Her parents were Joseph and Magdalena Yoder. In 1891 Wm. B. Weaver with his parents moved to Lagrange County, Indiana. Here he grew to manhood. He received his common school education and four years of high school. He then attended Goshen College where he received his A. B. degree in 1914. He taught public school for six years and at Goshen College for eight years. He received his M. A. degree at Northwestern University in 1926.

He was baptized in the spring of 1906 by Bishop John Garber and united with the Emma Mennonite Church. He served as Sunday School superintendent for five years.

May 30, 1915, he married Fanny A. Stoltzfus, born August 13, 1887, near Hartford, Kansas. She is the daughter of Rev. Benjamin and Emma Rich Stoltzfus, Lima, Ohio.

William B. Weaver was licensed to preach in the spring of 1913 by the Indiana Michigan Mission Board. He preached one year at Barker Street Mennonite Church near Vistula, Indiana. He was ordained to the ministry September 14, 1914 by Bishop J. K. Bixler and became pastor of the Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Indiana. He served as pastor

until September, 1920, when he moved to Goshen, Indiana. He became pastor of the North Danvers Mennonite Church July 1, 1922. He was installed by Rev. J. H. King, Rev. Allen Miller and Rev. Emanuel Troyer. He has served as editor of the Christian Evangel from October, 1923, till October, 1925. He is at present editor of the Christian Evangel and pastor of the North Danvers Mennonite Church.

REV. A. M. EASH (1882-)

Rev. A. M. Eash was born August 22, 1882, near Middlebury, Indiana. His father was Emanuel Eash and his grandfather Samuel Eash. His grandmother was Sarah Keim Eash. The Eash family came from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, to Indiana. His mother was Anna Adeline Schrock Eash, daughter of Cornelius and Magdalena Bontrager Schrock. They came to Indiana from Holmes County, Ohio.

Rev. A. M. Eash grew to manhood near Middlebury, Indiana. He was baptized October, 1898, by Bishop P. Y. Lehman and united with the Shore Mennonite Church. He came to Chicago in the fall of 1903 and was employed as a stenographer in the office of the Mining World and later of the Billposter's Association of the United States and Canada. The years 1904 and 1905 were spent in mission work under Rev. A. H. Leaman at the Home Mission. During 1905 and 1906 he worked for Albaugh Brothers, a Brethren mail order firm.

He was married to Anna Annacker October 19, 1905, by Rev. A. H. Leaman. She was born in Berlin, Germany, January 10, 1880, and came to America in 1886.

In the fall of 1906 a new mission station was opened under the leadership of Rev. A. H. Leaman on 26th Street, Chicago, and A. M. Eash became superintendent of the new mssion. He was ordained to the ministry at the Mennonite Mission, September, 1909, by Bishop J. S. Shoemaker of Freeport, Illinois. He served as superintendent of the mission until July 1, 1919, when he went to Palestine in the service of the Near

East Relief. He had charge of the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem. He returned to America September 1, 1921, and again assumed charge of the 26th Street Mission. He is at present superintendent of the mission. He is a member of the Christian Workers Institute Committee of the Conference.

REV. H. E. NUNEMAKER (1893-)

Rev. H. E. Nunemaker was born December 11, 1893, near Sterling, Illinois. His father was Samuel Nunemaker, born September 17, 1852, in Elkhart County, Indiana. The Nunemakers came from Pennsylvania. His mother was Frances Ebersole Nunemaker, born March 14, 1853 in Berks County, Pennsylvania. Rev. Nunemaker received his common school education near Sterling, Illinois, where he grew to manhood. He entered Goshen College in the fall of 1912 and graduated from the Academy in 1916 and from the college with an A. B. degree in 1921. He attended Garrett Biblical Institute six weeks.

He was baptized in the spring of 1903 by Rev. J. S. Shoemaker and united with the Science Ridge Mennonite Church near Sterling, Illinois. He served as a Sunday School teacher, assistant superintendent and president of the Young People's Meeting in the church.

February 5, 1922, he married Alma Ruth Hostettler of Elkhart, Indiana. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. Wm. B. Weaver. His wife was born June 2, 1894, in Lagrange County, Indiana. Her parents were Samuel S. Hostettler, born November 20, 1873 and Anna Cripe Hostettler, born May 16, 1870. He accepted a call from the Danvers Mennonite Church and served as pastor from March 1, 1924 to Feb. 1, 1927. He was ordained as minister and bishop March 29, 1925, by Rev. Aaron Augspurger and Rev. Emanuel Troyer. He edited the Year Book of 1926 and was editor of the Evangel from October, 1925 to October, 1926. He is at present pastor of the Comins Mennonite Church, Comins, Mich.

REV. I. R. DETWEILER (1873-)

Rev. I. R. Detweiler was born August 24, 1873, near Souderton, Pennsylvania. He lived near Sterling, Illinois, until 1888, when he moved to Octavia, Nebraska. His father was Joseph B. Detweiler and his mother Hettie Rutt Detweiler. After receiving his common school and high school education he attended Elkhart Institute and Goshen College. He also attended Bethany Bible School, Garrett Biblical Institute and Chicago University. He was professor of Bible at Goshen College for a number of years and also served as acting president of the college. He was baptized in 1898 by Bishop J. F. Funk, Elkhart, Indiana. He was married to Bertha Zook in 1902. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. J. S. Hartzler. His wife's parents were Abiah Zook and Emma Hooley Zook. He was ordained to the ministry in 1904 at Topeka, Indiana, by Bishop Jonathan Kurtz and became a minister in the Maple Grove Church. He served as a missionary to India from 1902-1904 under the Old Conference. He was pastor of the Goshen College congregation for a number of years. He accepted a call to the pastorate of the Eighth Street Mennonite Church in 1923. He is serving at present as pastor of the Eighth Street Church. He is also treasurer of the Congo Inland Mission Board.

REV. REUBEN ZEHR (1899-)

Rev. Reuben Zehr was born August 12, 1899, in Livingston County, Illinois, near Flanagan. His father was Rev. J. B. Zehr whose biography has been given. He was baptized in 1910 by Rev. J. B. Zehr and united with the Flanagan Mennonite Church.

August 26, 1923, he married Magdalena Irene Lehman. The ceremony was performed by his father, Rev. Zehr. His wife was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Lehman. Her grandparents were Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Lehman and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Unzicker.

Reuben Zehr was installed as pastor of the Congerville

Mennonite Church September 6, 1925. He was ordained to the ministry in January, 1927, by Rev. J. H. King. He is at present serving as secretary of the Ministerial Association.

REV. FRANK MITCHELL (1896-)

Rev. Franklin Rea Mitchell was born April 8, 1896, at Orland, Illinois, a little village southwest of Chicago. His parents were John and Alice Mitchell. When Frank Mitchell was about two years old his parents moved to the City of Chicago. He was baptized by a traveling evangelist, Rev. Moore and united with a Baptist church in Chicago. In July, 1915, he and his mother began attending special tent meetings held by the Mennonite Mission at Carpenter Street. In the fall of 1918 he entered Bluffton College to prepare himself for definite Christian work. While at college and seminary he has served the pulpits of Tiskilwa, Eighth Street, Bethel and Boynton Mennonite during the summer months. He served as assistant pastor of the Boynton Mennonite Church and in 1926 he was called by the church to serve as their pastor.

REV. EARL SALZMAN (1895-)

Earl L. Salzman was born September 13, 1895, near Carlock, Illinois. His father is Hiram Salzman and his grandfather Christ Salzman, who came from Ohio to Illinois and in 1860 married Mary Troyer. She died June 9, 1873. In 1881 his grandfather, married Miss Lizzie Hodler and lived in Chicago until his death in March, 1908.

Earl Salzman's mother was Miss King, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peter King who were born in Butler County, Ohio, and came to Illinois with their parents when quite young. The grandparents died in the summer of 1905.

Earl Salzman was baptized in 1904 and united with the East White Oak Mennonite Church. He received a common school education and then attended Brown's Business College three winter terms. November 14, 1920, he was licensed to preach and January 5, 1921, he entered Bluffton College to prepare

himself for the ministry. He graduates in the spring of 1927 with the Th. B. degree from Witmarsum Seminary. In the summer vacations he has been assistant pastor in the East White Oak Mennonite Church.

REV. EMANUEL AUGSPURGER (1884-)

Emanuel Augspurger was born July 1, 1884, near Danvers, Illinois. His father was Joseph S. Augspurger, who came from Butler County, Ohio, in 1866. His grandfather was Rev. Joseph Augspurger, born in Alsace, France, May 19, 1818, and came to America in 1819. His great-grandfather was Jacob Augspurger, one of the first settlers to come to Butler County, Ohio, and the first Amish minister to be ordained in Butler County.

Emanuel Augspurger's mother was Jacobina Stuckey Augspurger, daughter of Father Stuckey. It is of interest to note that Emanuel Augspurger's great-grandfather, Rev. Jacob Augspurger, baptized his grandfather Rev. Joseph Stuckey in Butler County, Ohio.

Emanuel Augspurger grew to manhood in the community of Danvers, Illinois. He was baptized in 1899 by Father Stuckey and united with the North Danvers Mennonite Church.

He was married to Emma Mae Lehman, December 22, 1909. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. Andrew Vercler. His wife was born March 11, 1888. She was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Lehman.

Emanuel Augspurger was licensed to preach by Rev. J. H. King in 1922. He preached his first sermon at Meadows, Illinois, July 3, 1921. He does not have a regular charge but assists at various churches. He has preached at Hopedale, Flanagan, East White Oak, Danvers, Anchor, Pekin and Congerville.

REV. ERNEST BOHN (1894-)

Rev. Ernest Bohn was born in 1894 in Woodford County, Illinois. His father was Henry Bohn and his mother Rosa Zoss Bohn. His grandfather and grandmother Bohn came from

Alsace-Lorraine. His mother's parents came from Switzerland. Ernest Bohn moved to Fisher, Illinois, in 1895 and lived there until 1910 and then moved to Elkhart County, Indiana, near Millersburg. He received his common school education in Illinois and his academy and college work at Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana. He received his degree in 1923. He was a student at Princeton Theological Seminary 1923-1925. He received his B. D. degree from Garrett Biblical Institute in 1926.

He was baptized in 1909 by Bishop Peter Zehr of the Fisher congregation. In 1924 he married Nora Lantz. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. S. S. Yoder of Middlebury, Indiana. His wife's parents were Melvin D. Lantz and Catherine Yoder Lantz of Topeka, Indiana.

Ernest Bohn served as a Sunday School teacher for eight years and filled the pulpit as supply while a student at Princeton Seminary. He accepted a call to the Tiskilwa Mennonite Church September, 1925. He was ordained to the ministry August 15, 1926, by Rev. Allen Miller and Rev. Emanuel Troyer. He is at present a member of the Christian Workers Institute Committee of the Conference.

REV. S. S. YODER (1878-)

Rev. Simon S. Yoder was born May 5, 1878, in Lagrange County, Indiana. His father was Simon Yoder and his grandfather was Joseph Yoder of Lagrange County, Indiana. His grandfather was born November 20, 1819, and died September 4, 1863, in Lagrange County, Indiana. His grandmother Magdalena Yoder was born June 11, 1821, Somerset County, Pa., and died January 3, 1861, in Lagrange County, Indiana. His mother was Fannie Miller Yoder, the daughter of Jacob S. Miller, born December 10, 1795, and died in 1874. His grandmother, Fannie Hershberger, was born May 9, 1806, and died February 2, 1892.

S. S. Yoder received his common school education and also attended normal school which prepared him to teach. He taught public school for twenty years.

He was baptized April, 1893, by Bishop D. J. Johns and united with the Forks Mennonite Church. He served as Sunday School teacher and superintendent for a number of years. He was ordained to the office of deacon in the spring of 1903. He was ordained to the ministry in the Middlebury Mennonite Church in December, 1907. He served as a member of the Sunday School Program Committee of the Indiana Michigan Conference from 1904 to 1916. From 1916 to 1923 he was chairman of the Executive Sunday School Committee. He was also a member of the General Sunday School Committee of the Old Mennonites from the time of its organization until 1923.

He was married to Sarah Troyer May 14, 1899. She was the daughter of Samuel Troyer and Catherine Hershberger Troyer. Rev. Yoder is pastor of the Warren Street Mennonite Church and a member of the Christian Workers Institute Committee.

REV. W. W. OESCH (1884-)

Rev. W. W. Oesch was born in Cass County, Missouri, near Garden City, July 16, 1884. His father was John Oesch, born in Waterloo County, Ontario, and his grandfather Christian Oesch who came from Alsace-Lorraine. His mother was Amanda Smith Oesch, born in Butler County, Ohio, and moved with her parents to Missouri.

W. W. Oesch grew to manhood in Missouri where he received his common school education and also attended a normal school for a term. In 1904 he came to Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana, and graduated in 1910.

He was baptized in 1900 by Bishop John Hartzler and became a member of the Amish-Mennonite Church near Garden City, Missouri. August 10, 1910, he was married to Elva Alice Garber. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. David Garber of LaJunta, Colorado. His wife's father was Abraham Garber and the grandfather Abraham Garber who was one of the early pioneers of Elkhart County. Her mother was Mary

Troyer, daughter of John Troyer and Catherine Egli Troyer.

He served as teacher and superintendent of Sunday School for six years. He was ordained to the ministry by Bishop J. K. Bixler in October, 1914, and became the pastor of the Barker Street Mennonite Church near Vistula, Indiana. He is at present pastor of the Barker Street Church.

REV. E. A. SOMMER (1884-)

Rev. Emil A. Sommer was born April 2, 1884, near Flanagan, Ill. He grew to manhood and received his common school education at Fairbury, Illinois, and at Goodland, Indiana. He attended Moody Bible Institute two and one-half years. He was baptized in 1900 by Rev. D. D. Augspurger. He married Lydia Mae Augspurger in 1909. He was ordained to the ministry in 1916 at Carlock, Illinois, by Rev. J. H. King and Rev. John Kinsinger. Before his ordination he served as Christian Endeavor superintendent, teacher of Bible class and assistant pastor. He volunteered for Africa and sailed in the year 1916. He is at present a missionary on the field.

A number of ministers have come into the Conference for only a few years. Mention will be made of them here.

Rev. Menno Niswander went to Nampa, Idaho, from the Silver Street Mennonite Church and served the Nampa, Idaho, Church for one year in 1912.

Rev. A. S. Bechtel came from the General Conference to the Normal Mennonite Church in 1919 as pastor. He remained with the church for one year. During this time he also served as editor of the Christian Evangel.

Rev. Alvin K. Ropp came from the Old Mennonites and served as pastor of the Silver Street Church for almost two years, 1911 to 1913, and then was instrumental in starting the Eighth Street Mennonite Church, located at the time at Fifth Street, Goshen, Indiana.

Rev. W. W. Miller came from the General Conference Mission in Chicago and became pastor of the Eighth Street Mennonite Church from 1920 to 1923.

Rev. A. B. Rutt came from the Old Mennonites at the Home Mission, Chicago, and became superintendent of the Mennonite Gospel Mission at Carpenter Street from its beginning in 1909 to about 1914. Rev. Rutt was also editor of the Evangel for three years, from 1910 to 1913.

Rev. Jacob Donner and his son, Rev. George Donner, were ministers in the Aurora, Nebraska, Church for a number of years.

Rev. L. E. Blauch came from the Old Mennonites and became pastor of the Eighth Street Mennonite Church for several years. He was ordained to the ministry by Rev. John Lehman of Topeka, Indiana.

SUPPLEMENT

MARRIAGES PERFORMED BY REV. JOSEPH STUCKEY.

These Marriages Were Taken from Rev. Stuckey's Own References.

John Detweiler	Elizabeth Gerber	Oct. 20, 1864
Jonathan Yoder	Catherine Ballaman	Nov. 8, 1864
Joseph Beachler	Magdalena Farney	Jan. 12, 1865
William Hans	Anna Yoder	Oct. 1, 1865
Christian Gerber	Marie Risser	Oct. 5, 1865
Nicholas Strubhar	Elizabeth Rupp	Oct. 17, 1865
Andrew Risser	Marie Schweitzer	Dec. 20, 1865
Christian Strubhar	Magdalene Ehrsmann	Feb. 20, 1866
Peter E. Stuckey	Catherine Engel	Feb. 22, 1866
David Rupp	Barbara King	Nov. 4, 1866
Jacob Naffziger	Anna Zook	Dec. 16, 1866
Jonathan Yoder	Barbara Fry	Dec. 20 1866
Stephen Stahley	Barbara Schantz	Dec. 20, 1866
Frederick Zerlein	Marie Stauffer	Feb. 3, 1867
John Heines	Marie Wilrich	Mar. 10, 1867
Jacob Unzicker	Jacobina Engel	Nov. 7, 1867
Christian Schwartzentruber	Elizabeth Fry	Dec. 24, 1867
Joseph King	Anna Hueller	Jan. 30, 1868
Peter Rupp	Marie Rupp	Feb. 2, 1868
Joseph Yoder	Marie Zehrline	Feb. 25, 1868
Jacob Gundy	Lena Kinsinger	Jan. 14, 1869
Peter Gerber	Catherine Habecker	Jan. 19, 1869
Philip Kohler	Elizabeth Ummel	Jan. 31, 1869
David Moseman	Anna Stecker	Nov. 9, 1869
Jacob Newhouser	Anna Meyer	Nov. 10 1869
Christian Moseman	Catherine Sommer	Dec. 28, 1869
Jacob Ingold	Catherine Sick	Dec. 30, 1869
Amos F. Yoder	Barbara Habecker	Jan. 4, 1870
John Oswalt	Veronica Roth	Mar. 17, 1870
Joseph King	Elizabeth Schlegel	Apr. 5, 1870
Solomon Yoder	Lydia Esch	Apr. 7, 1870
Daniel Schwartzentruber	Elizabeth Birkey	July 26, 1870
Jonathan A. Yoder	Marie Staub	Aug. 7, 1870
Edward Sanday	Elizabeth Zehr	Sept. 8, 1870
John Ummel	Elizabeth Saltzman	Oct. 20, 1870
Albert Schellhorn	Jacobina Gingerich	Dec. 6, 1870
Christian Kinsinger	Magdalena Strubhar	Jan. 10, 1871

Abraham Kohler	Rosy Ummel	Jan. 26, 1871
Joseph King	Catherine Waugler	Feb. 1, 1871
Joseph Zook	Leah Plank	Feb. 13, 1871
Andrew Oesch	Magdalena Unzicker	Feb. 21, 1871
Daniel Kauffman	Magdalena Gerber	Mar. 2, 1871
John Stahley	Marie Stahley	Mar. 4, 1871
Joseph Burkey	Elizabeth Rediger	Mar. 5, 1871
Peter D. Naffziger	Magdalena Zook	Mar. 14, 1871
Joseph Hodler	Magdalena Lehe	Mar. 28, 1871
John A. Saltzman	Magdalena Strubhar	Apr. 4, 1871
David Ummel	Rosina Luthy	Sept. 16, 1871
Christian Reber	Catherine Miller	Dec. 21, 1871
John Meyers	Lizzie Gerber	Dec. 26, 1871
Levi D. Yoder	Jacobina Fry	Jan. 10, 1872
Michael Rupp	Susanna Zook	Feb. 2, 1872
John L. Rupp	Marie Rupp	Feb. 6, 1872
John Miller	Lena Baughman	Mar. 5, 1872
Jacob Orendorff	Elizabeth Sommer	Mar. 19, 1872
Albert Walter	Sanel Miller	Mar. 28, 1872
Christian Sommer	Barbara Rogge	June 4, 1872
Jacob Lantz	Emma Yoder	Sept. 10, 1872
Peter Schnur	Magdalena Stecker	Dec. 11, 1872
John Ringenberg	Lena Albrecht	Dec. 14, 1872
Christian R. Stuckey	Catherine Strubhar	Dec. 23, 1872
John Shafer	Mary Strubhar	Dec. 24, 1872
Jacob Nusbaum	Catherine King	Dec. 26, 1872
Samuel King	Mary Schad	Dec. 31, 1872
Christian Fry	Caroline Troyer	Dec. 21, 1872
Washington Grove	Mary Dellenbach	Jan. 4, 1873
John Gerber	Emelia Unzicker	Jan. 28, 1873
Christian Engle	Elizabeth Naffziger	Feb. 6, 1873
Christian Schmit	Jacobina Schweitzer	Feb. 13, 1873
William Yoder	Veronica Stauffer	Mar. 4, 1873
Frederick Haushalter	Mary Imhoff	Mar. 7, 1873
Daniel Albrecht	Magdalena Unzicker	Mar. 15, 1873
Henry Augspurger	Anna Risser	May 5, 1873
Joseph Risser	Catherine Schweitzer	July 17, 1873
Christian Miller	Royal Scharp	Oct. 9, 1873
Peter Schrock	Lena Unzicker	Nov. 13, 1873
Eli Gerber	Jacobina Gundy	Nov. 20, 1873
Jephthah Lantz	Mary E. Yoder	Dec. 23, 1873
Samuel Gerber	Catherine Naffziger	Jan. 20, 1874
Nickolas Strubhar	Hanna Yoder	Jan. 27, 1874

John B. Amberg	Nancy Yoder	Feb. 19, 1874
Valentine Naffziger	Maggie Risser	Sept. 14, 1874
John Beecher	Mary Schertz	Nov. 17, 1874
Louis Stalter	Jacobina Rediger	Dec. 3, 1874
John Stecker	Mary Schertz	Dec. 8, 1874
John Yoder	Rebecca Lantz	Dec. 28, 1874
Joseph Streid	Barbara Hudler	Dec. 28, 1874
David D. Augspurger	Magdalena Schrock	Dec. 31, 1874
Christian Beck	Barbara Schick	Jan. 5, 1875
Joseph B. Gerber	Susan Ehrsman	Jan. 14, 1875
Ferdinand Schertz	Mary Gerber	Jan. 19, 1875
Moses Kamp	Barbara Bellsley	Jan. 25, 1875
Joseph Ropp	Barbara Farney	Feb. 4, 1875
Joseph Haushalter	Caroline Greiser	Feb. 7, 1875
Peter Claudon	Catherine Vercler	Feb. 14, 1875
Augustus Schertz	Elizabeth Gerber	Feb. 16, 1875
Jacob Kinsinger	Phoebe Naffziger	Feb. 18, 1875
Joseph Sommer	Anna Schertz	Feb. 25, 1875
Joseph Martin	Mary Egli	Mar. 4, 1875
Daniel Kinsinger	Mary Schick	Mar. 11, 1875
John Ruvenach	Lena Engle	Mar. 11, 1875
John Lantz	Addie Clark	Mar. 21, 1875
Christian Rediger	Catherine Risser	Mar. 25, 1875
Christian Imhoff	Barbara Ehrsman	Oct. 12 1875
John Schertz	Mary Stuckey	Dec. 21, 1875
Peter Schantz	Anna Kinsinger	Dec. 23, 1875
Peter Risser	Barbara Strubhar	Dec. 28, 1875
Jacob Yoder	Lydia King	Jan. 25, 1876
Andrew Vercler	Jacobina Lehman	Feb. 3, 1876
Daniel Unzicker	Mary Hodler	Feb. 8, 1876
John Ummel	Rosa Ummel	June 20, 1876
Adam Zook	Miriam Kauffman	Sept. 26, 1876
Benjamin Lantz	Emma Troyer	Nov. 22, 1876
Christian Reber	Magdalena King	Dec. 12, 1876
Nickalos Meyer	Mary Ehrsman	Dec. 21, 1876
Jacob Kinsinger	Helena Koehn	Jan. 11, 1877
Joseph Kauffman	Mary Donner	Jan. 30, 1877
Joseph Schloneker	Mary Miller	Feb. 27, 1877
Andrew Beller	Elizabeth Beecher	Mar. 1, 1877
Benjamin Clark	Mary Lantz	Mar. 4, 1877
Jacob Schloneker	Rosa Maurer	Mar. 7, 1878
Joseph Newhouser	Barbara Stalter	Aug. 28, 1878
Samuel P. Yoder	Uree Lantz	Dec. 19, 1878

John Reber	Elizabeth Ehrsman	Feb. 6, 1879
Peter Rogge	Anna Zehr	Feb. 23, 1879
Joseph Fuhrer	Anna Sommer	May 27, 1879
Joseph Saltzman	Anna Stalter	July 17, 1879
John Miller	Helena Schlabach	Oct. 7, 1879
Aaron Lantz	Susan King	Oct. 21, 1879
Joseph B. Zehr	Jacobina King	Nov. 1, 1879
John E. Schertz	Barbara Risser	Dec. 23, 1879
John Engle	Lena B. Schertz	Dec. 25, 1879
Joseph Habecker	Katie Burkey	Aug. 29, 1880
J. H. Stutzman	Magdalena B. Miller	Sept. 16, 1880
John I. Plank	Barbara Kauffman	Oct. 26, 1880
Christian H. Saltzman	Elizabeth Miller	Nov. 25, 1880
John W. Strubhar	Catherine Farney	Dec. 2, 1880
David Danzer	Anna Baumetz	Jan. 3, 1881
Joseph Eymann	Catherine Beller	Jan. 6, 1881
Joseph E. Zook	Malinda Kauffman	Feb. 15, 1881
Christian Habecker	Irene Stutzman	Mar. 10, 1881
Amos G. Smith, Ia.	Anna Reese, Ia.	Oct. 23, 1881
John Ernst	Phoebe King	Dec. 22, 1881
Jacob Beller	Anna Zimmerman	Jan. 10, 1882
Samuel Kauffman	Barbara Gerber	Feb. 21, 1882
Joseph Bertsche	Urina Grissar	Feb. 24, 1882
Peter Schrock	Catherine Roszhart	Aug. 15, 1882
Peter Clauden	Magdalene Engle	Sept. 21, 1882
Solomon Burkey	Katie Zehr	Oct. 26, 1882
Christian Zehr	Mary Unzicker	Nov. 23, 1882
William Egli	Phoebe Augstine	Feb. 1, 1883
John B. Gungrich	Lizzie Maurer	Feb. 6, 1883
Daniel Miller	Maggie Denler	Feb. 22, 1883
Christian Lehman	Catherine Myer	Feb. 17, 1883
Joseph E. Stuckey	Katie B. Miller	Feb. 26, 1883
John Kohler	Catherine Maurer	Mar. 13, 1883
Joseph H. King	Salina Lantz	Oct. 16, 1883
Joseph Forney	Mary Penner, Kan.	Nov. 22, 1883
Samuel F. King	Anna B. Claudon	Dec. 4, 1883
James F. Tobias	Rosanna Strubhar	Dec. 13, 1883
John Detweiler	Elizabeth Miller	Dec. 18, 1883
Daniel B. King	Lucy King	Jan. 15, 1884
Daniel Augustine	Emma A. King	Jan. 15, 1884
Jacob Engle	Lydia A. King	Feb. 5, 1884
John Y. Sharp	Mary Miller	Mar. 4, 1884
Gearge Kirchner	Carolina Kinsinger	Oct. 16, 1884

David Y. King	Mary L. Zook, Logan Co., O.	Nov. 16, 1884
John Gyssler	Lena Bertsche	Feb. 15, 1885
Christian Lehman	Catherine Myer	Feb. 19, 1885
Joseph Augspurger	Jacobina Rupp, Ohio	Apr. 7, 1885
John E. Yoder	Rosa Zimmerman	Sept. 6, 1885
John Troyer	Anna Troyer	Sept. 17, 1885
Joseph J. Clark	Mary M. Yoder	Sept. 22, 1885
Joseph Hodler	Mary Beller	Dec. 15, 1885
Abraham Stutzman	Nancy Lantz	Jan. 31, 1886
Ulysses Stutzman	Mary Lantz	Jan. 31, 1886
Joseph Baughman	Anna Ruvanach	Feb. 4, 1886
Rufus Bardwell	Mary Ummel	Aug. 31, 1886
Adam King	Lizzie Holderly	Oct. 7, 1886
Valentine Birky	Anna Ramseyer	Jan. 27, 1887
Henry Kinsinger	Katie Bertsche	Jan. 30, 1887
Joseph A. Lehman	Martha Unzicker	Feb. 3, 1887
Abraham Ummel	Amy Ramseyer	Feb. 10, 1887
Fred Schafter	Phoebe King	Feb. 15, 1887
Christian King	Katie Steinman	Mar. 3, 1887
Samuel A. Zehr	Elizabeth Lehman	June 16, 1887
Christian Witmer	Anna Ramseyer, Ia.	Oct. 13, 1887
John Lantz	Lydia Lantz	Dec. 7, 1887
Jacob Baughman	Katie Gingrich	Dec. 8, 1887
Chris Egli	Fannie Augspurger	Jan. 19, 1888
Milo Lantz	Lydia Ropp	Jan. 25, 1888
Henry Denler	Lena Augspurger	Jan. 26, 1888
Jacob Rediger	Elizabeth Denler	Jan. 26, 1888
Michael Ramseyer	Louisa Risser	Feb. 14, 1888
Gustave Naffziger	Emma Maurer	Feb. 21, 1888
Samuel Stuckey	Lydia Augspurger	Mar. 13, 1888
Aaron Forney	Mary King	Jan. 22, 1889
Christian Gerber	Mary Saltzman	Jan. 24, 1889
Peter Vercler	Katie Rogge	Feb. 7, 1889
August Miller	Lydie Maurer	Feb. 14, 1889
Ulysses Stutzman	Bertha Augspurger	Oct. 22, 1889
Abraham Plank	Anna Heina, Yoder	Dec. 1, 1889
Louis Lampl	Lena Egli	Dec. 19, 1889
Joseph Maurer	Amelia Newhouser	Dec. 22, 1889
Daniel Baughman	Anna King	Dec. 23, 1889
Samuel E. Naffziger	Emma Gungrich	Jan. 7, 1890
Hiram Saltzman	Pheobe King	Jan. 15, 1890
John Augspurger	Katie Saltzman	Jan. 23, 1890
Jacob L. Plank	Mary Stutzman	Jan. 23, 1890

Joseph Holderly	Adalina Zook	Feb. 6, 1890
Aaron Augspurger	Emma Schertz	Feb. 20, 1890
Jacob Miller	Lizzie Zook	Feb. 26, 1890
Rufus Rader	Susan Ramseyer	Feb. 27, 1890
Sam Ummel	Lucy Otto	Mar. 6, 1890
Isaac Hooley	Lydia Lantz	Mar. 6, 1890
John Lantz	Anna Sharp	June 24, 1890
John S. Stahley	Anna Stuckey	Sept. 9, 1890
Fred Burkey	Fannie Schertz	Sept. 25, 1890
John Bertsche	Phoebe Kinsinger	Jan. 11, 1891
S. E. Maurer	Dinah E. Ropp	Feb. 12, 1891
John D. Zook	Anna L. Kauffman	Mar. 3, 1891
Christian King	Mary Baechler	May 14, 1891
Albert Gerber	Lena Schertz	Sept. 8, 1891
Henry W. Schertz	Molly Schwartzentrub	Dec. 22, 1891
David Schertz	Katie Kauffman	Jan. 12, 1892
George Schertz	Alla Troyer	Jan. 21, 1892
John Heibert	Julia Appel	Jan. 26, 1892
Joseph Eichelberger	Rosa Naffziger	Feb. 4, 1892
John Bartsche	Fannie Kinsinger	Feb. 16, 1892
William Burkey	Ida Fry	Feb. 17, 1892
Jacob Steinman	Katie Unzicker	Feb. 17, 1892
Joseph Gascho	Anna King	Feb. 28, 1892
Jacob Mohr	Lizzie Basting	Mar. 2, 1892
David Ummel	Lena Dann Habeck	Apr. 28, 1892
John Forney	Mattie Kropf	July 5, 1892
Ed. Scharp	Emma Lantz	Nov. 17, 1892
Ben Wise	Alla King	Jan. 26, 1893
Albert Naffziger	Ophelia Kinsinger	Feb. 7, 1893
Abraham Maurer	Emma Kennel	Feb. 9, 1893
Christian Eymann	Katie Vercler Rogge	Feb. 21, 1893
John Eymann	Mary Rogge	Feb. 23, 1893
Jacob Stuckey	Mannie Troyer	June 7, 1893
William Thewlies	Saloma Gasco	Oct. 4, 1893
Daniel King	Laura Rinkenburg	Feb. 6, 1894
Hiram Troyer	Lizzie Guengrich	Dec. 12, 1894
Albert Haushalten	Lena Springer	Jan. 27, 1895
Chris Miller	Phoebe Miller	Mar. 5, 1896
Ben Scharp	Lavina Augspurger	Nov. 26, 1896
Daniel Ummel	Eliza Jane Fogel	Feb. 16, 1897
David Risser, Eureka	Allie Miller, Congerville	Dec. 28, 1898
Daniel Ehrsman	Magdalena Augspurger	Mar. 28, 1899
Chris Zehr	Mary Miller	April 1900

William Renkel	Katie Zehr	Dec. 2, 1900
George Bender	Barbara Springer	Dec. 12, 1900
Henry Dallman	Bertha Springer	Dec. 12, 1900

255 Marriages to 1901.

IMPORTANT DATES IN CENTRAL CONFERENCE MENNONITE HISTORY

1496 Birth of Menno Simon.
1517 Beginning of Reformation.
1525 Beginning of Anabaptism.
1536 Menno Simon leaves Catholic Church.
1537 Menno Simon becomes leader of Peaceful Anabaptists.
1561 Death of Menno Simon.
1632 Dortrecht Confession of Faith.
1693 Rise of Amish.
1720 First Amish to America. (Barbara Yoder).
1727-1750 Emigration of Amish to America.
1770-1800 Amish settle in Western Pennsylvania.
1795 Birth of Jonathan Yoder.
1808-1840 Amish settlements in Ohio and Indiana.
1819 Christian Augspurger and four other families come to Butler County, Ohio.
1819 First white man in Central Illinois.
1822 First white settlers in McLean County, Illinois.
1823 First white settlers in Woodford County, Illnois.
1825 Birth of Rev. Joseph Stuckey.
1825 First white settlers in Danvers Township.
1826 First white settlers in Dry Grove Township.
1827 First white settlers along the Mackinaw River.
1829 Peter Maurer comes to McLean County, Illinois. The first Amish in Illinois.
1830 Nicholas Maurer and John Strubhar come to McLean and Woodford Counties.
1830 Rev. Joseph Stuckey and his parents come to Butler County, Ohio.
1832 Hessian Mennonites come to Butler County, Ohio.
1833 First Amish church organized in the State of Illinois.
1835 Division of the church in Butler County into Amish and Hessian congregations.
1832-1850 The Amish settle in Central Illinois.

1837 Peter Donner Sr., a Hessian Mennonite, comes to Dry Grove, McLean County, Illinois.
1842 Rev. Michaél Kistler comes to McLean County as a Hessian Mennonite preacher.
1848 Joseph Yoder, the author of "Die Frohe Botschaft", came to McLean County, Illinois.
1850 Rev. Joseph Stuckey and family came to McLean County, Illinois.
1850 The Amish settle on the prairies.
1851 Rev. Jonathan Yoder comes to McLean County, Illinois.
1852 Beginning of Amish church services in the homes in McLean County under the leadership of Rev. Jonathan Yoder.
1853 The first railroads in McLean County, Illinois.
1853 The first Amish church house in the United States built at Rock Creek, five miles north of Danvers, Illinois.
1855 Free English school supported by taxation.
1860 Joseph Stuckey ordained minister.
1862 Amish Conferences of United States and Canada begin.
1864 Rev. Joseph Stuckey ordained bishop.
1866 The United States Amish Conference held in John Strubhar's barn, Danvers, Illinois.
1867 First Sunday School organized by the Amish of Central Illinois.
1869 Sunday School held in church house for first time.
1869 Death of Rev. Jonathan Yoder.
1870 Separation of (Stuckey Amish) from the Amish Conference.
1872 North Danvers Mennonite Church house built.
1880 Sunday School held with morning church service at North Danvers.
1882 Peter Schantz ordained minister.
1890 English introduced into the Amish churches.
1892 First Christian Endeavor Society in the Conference.
1896 First Sunday School workers meeting held in the Conference.
1896 Deaconess Memorial Hospital established in Bloomington. (Mennonite superintendent and nurses).
1898 Middle District Conference of General Conference of Mennonites held at Danvers, Illinois.
1899 First Minister's Meeting held at the home of Rev. J. H. King, August 5.
1900 Sunday School Conference and Church Conference meet together.
1900 Sunday School Association formed.
1902 Death of Rev. Joseph Stuckey.
1905 International Sunday School lessons introduced.
1905 Foreign Mission Committee organized.

1905 Beginning of foreign missions.
1906 Two first missionaries, L. B. Haigh and Miss Rose Boehning, leave for British East Africa.
1907 Constitutional Committee chosen to draft constitution for Conference.
1908 Evangelizing Committee appointed.
1908 Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites organized.
1909 Home Mission Committee organized.
1909 First city mission established.
1909 First delegate session at Conference.
1909 First Ladies' Aid organized.
1909 Central Mennonite Board of Home and Foreign Mission organized.
1909 Rev. and Mrs. Haigh return on furlough from British East Africa.
1910 First issue of Christian Evangel published. July.
1911 Ministerial Association formed.
1911 Rev. and Mrs. Haigh sent by Congo Inland Mission Board to Belgian Congo to investigate field.
1912 Congo Inland Mission Board organized. Union of Central Conference and Defenseless Mennonites.
1912 Rev. A. J. Stevenson sent to Belgian Congo to assist Rev. Haigh.
1913 First Christian Endeavor Rally held.
1913 First Missionary died. Rev. Stevenson.
1913 Belgian Government grants sites to Congo Inland Mission Board for two first foreign mission stations.
1913 Bluffton College and Mennonite Seminary is established as a union school.
1913 Fourteen members of the Central Conference attend first All-Mennonite Convention.
1914 Conference is called Central Conference of Mennonites.
1914 Christian Endeavor Union formed.
1917 First Christian Workers Conference held.
1917 Committee appointed to establish Old People's Home.
1917 Committee appointed to investigate concerning the establishing of a Hospital.
1918 Conference enter Relief Work.
1919 Old People's Home Board organized.
1919 Mennonite Sanitarium Association organized. January 23.
1919 First patients received in new Hospital. May 1.
1920 The first stations selected in the Bampende tribe in Africa.
1920 Kelso Sanitarium is purchased by Mennonites.
1921 Witmarsum Theological Seminary is established.

1922 First Year Book of Cenference is printed.
1922 First trained nurse's class graduated.
1922 Central Conference decides to support chair at Seminary.
1923 Dedication of Old People's Home at Meadows, Illinois, May 20.
1925 Christian Workers' Institutes established.
1925 Conference Ladies' Aid organization formed.
1925 First Young People's Retreat.
1926 Missionary Bulletin issued to all the churches by treasurer of Foreign Mission Board.
1927 First history written of Central Conference of Mennonites.

CHARTER MEMBER CONGREGATIONS

Name of Congregation	Date of Organization
North Danvers Mennonite	1852
South Danvers Mennonite	1859
Calvary Mennonite	1866
Flanagan Mennonite	1878
Pleasant View, Aurora, Nebraska	1885
Meadows Mennonite	1890
East White Oak	1892
Anchor Mennonite	1894
Zion Mennonite, Goodland, Indiana	1895
Congerville Mennonite	1896
Topeka Mennonite	1902
Bethel Mennonite, Pekin, Illinois	1905

Name of Congregation	Date Entered Conference
Boynton Mennonite, Hopedale	1910
South Nampa Mennonite	1910
Silver Street, Goshen, Indiana	1911
First Mennonite, Normal	1912
Tiskilwa Mennonite	1912
South Washington Mennonite	1912
Eighth Street Mennonite	1913
Carlock Mennonite	1914
Kouts Mennonite	1918
Belleview Mennonite, Columbus, Kansas	1920
Washington Center Mennonite, North Star, Michigan	1924
Comins Mennonite, Comins, Michigan	1925
Warren Street Mennonite, Middlebury, Indiana	1926
Barker Street Mennonite, Bristol, Indiana	1926

Mission Churches

Mennonite Gospel Mission, Chicago	1909
Mennonite Gospel Mission, Peoria	1914
Twenty-Sixth Street Mission, Chicago	1923

Sunday School Conferences

October 13, 1896	East White Oak
September 2, 1897	East Washington
June 2, 1898	Flanagan
September 14, 1899	South Danvers

Church Conferences

August 3, 1899	Minister's Meeting at Rev. J. H. King.
September 26, 1899	North Danvers Church.

Sunday School and Church Conferences.

September 6 and 7, 1900.	North Danvers.
September 26 and 27, 1901	East White Oak.
October 1 and 2, 1902	East Washington.
September 9 and 10, 1903	Flanagan.
September 14 and 15, 1904	South Danvers.
September 13 and 14, 1905	Meadows.
September 12 and 13, 1906	East White Oak.
September 18 and 19, 1907	Washington.
September 9 and 10, 1908	North Danvers.
September 22 and 23, 1909	Aurora, Nebraska.
September 21 and 22, 1910	Flanagan.
September 13 and 14 and 15, 1911	Meadows.
September 11, 12, 13, 1912	East White Oak.
September 17, 18, 19, 1913	South Washington.
September 9, 10, 11, 1914	Carlock.
August 25, 26, 27, 1915	Silver Street.
September 6, 7, 8, 1916	East Washington.
September 5, 6, 7, 1917	Hopedale.
August 27, 28, 29, 1918	North Danvers.
August 27, 28, 29, 1919	Bethel.
September 1, 2, 3, 1920	Flanagan.
August 24, 25, 26, 1921	Aurora, Nebraska.
August 30, 31, September 1, 1922	Meadows.
August 29, 30, 31, 1923	East White Oak.
September 3, 4, 5, 1924	Congerville.
August 30, 31, September 1, 1925	Silver Street.
September 4, 5, 6, 7, 1926	East Washington.

Presidents of the Conference

1899—Father Stuckey.
1899—Aaron Augspurger.
1900—Peter Schantz.
1901—John Kinsinger.
1902-1905—No record.
1906—Rev. Troyer.
1907, 1908—Rev. John Kohler.
1909—Allen Miller.
1910—Emanuel Troyer.
1911—John Lehman.
1912-1914—J. H. King.
1915-1917—Emanuel Troyer.
1918-1922—Allen Miller.
1923-1924—Allen Yoder.
1925-present—Allen Miller.

Secretaries.

1899-1905—Lee Lantz.
1906-1911—Aaron Augspurger.
1912-1922—M. P. Lantz.
1922-1924—Ben Esch.
1925-present—E. W. Rediger.

Field Secretaries.

1915—Emanuel Troyer.
1916-1920—Peter Schantz.
1921-1924—Rev. J. H. King.
1925-present—Emanuel Troyer.

Editors of Year Book.

1922-1925—W. H. Grubb.
1926—H. E. Nunemaker.
1927—W. B. Weaver.

Editors of Evangel

A. B. Rutt, July, 1910-January, 1913
Lee Lantz, February, 1913-September, 1916.
Ben Esch, October, 1916-September, 1919.
A. S. Bechtel, October, 1919-September, 1920.
L. B. Haigh, October, 1920-September, 1923.
Wm. B. Weaver, October, 1923-October, 1925.
H. E. Nunemaker, November, 1925,-October, 1926.
Wm. B. Weaver, November, 1926-Present.

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6. Symonds, John Addington, Short History of the Renaissance in Italy.

C. Menno Simon and Mennonites

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